



# Vente de rue, politique d'entretien et de renforcements des chaussées et métropolisation à Thika

Nathan Mwangi Kariuki

## ► To cite this version:

Nathan Mwangi Kariuki. Vente de rue, politique d'entretien et de renforcements des chaussées et métropolisation à Thika. Géographie. Université Michel de Montaigne - Bordeaux III, 2022. Français. NNT : 2022BOR30018 . tel-04029083

**HAL Id: tel-04029083**

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Université Bordeaux Montaigne

École Doctorale Montaigne Humanités (ED 480)

THÈSE DE DOCTORAT EN « Human Geography »

# **Street vending, Pavement Politics and Metropolisation in Thika**

12th December 2022

Nathan Mwangi Kariuki

Sous la direction de Bernard CALAS

Membres du jury

Bernard CALAS, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

Colman MSOKA, University of Dar es Salaam,

Aristide YEMMAFOUO, University of Dschang,

Sylvain RACAUD, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

## **Abstract**

The study explores street vending flows, the Metropolisation process in Thika, and how this is affected by the regulations in this secondary Town. The study also examines the contributions of different actors in Thika and its hinterland together with the Nairobi metropolis. A lot of research in this area has concentrated mainly on the issues of evictions and relocation of street vendors

The framework that guided the approach to this study examined the relationship between Street vending and its linkages between rural areas/hinterland, the City, and the secondary Town. Street vendors have created a trade route between Nairobi, Thika, and its hinterland.

The study used a mixed approach to arrive at its findings, drawing from both the primary and secondary data in the form of 47 interviews with street vendors, 17-in-depth interviews from key informants, 2-biographies from street vendors, Mapping, observation, and participatory research. The specific location under investigation was Thika's CBD, emphasizing Commercial Street and interconnected streets. The formal markets in Thika, like Moi/Mukiriti Market, Jamhuri Market, and Madaraka/Makongeni Market, were also under investigation because of their linkages to trading in the streets of Thika town.

Therefore, this study offers insight into the increase in Street vending on the pavements of Thika. First, due to perceived tolerance by the regulatory framework in Thika compared to Nairobi city and other surrounding towns. Yemmafouo (2018) notes that street vendors now have the ability to negotiate thanks to administrative and social tolerance. This ability manifests itself in the organization and takes its power from the close proximity and direct interaction between vendors and clients in medium-sized southern cities. Secondly, increased urbanization means an increasing population, making Thika attractive to any business venture. The increase in population can be attributed to the Town's infrastructural development, therefore attracting more vendors.

Lastly, the political environment has influenced how Street vending is conducted in Thika town. Political clientelism created between politicians and street vendors has allowed the latter to continue undertaking their business without fear of eviction by County authorities.

It is argued that Street vending can create jobs for the urban poor, linking formal and informal sectors and even linking urban areas to rural areas. Therefore, rather than opposing street vending, acceptable policies should be enacted. The street vendors, through their leaders, should be involved in formulating some of these policies to feel part of the urban landscape. For these to happen, street vendors should join the associations to bolster their bargaining power. From the results, only 21% of street vendors interviewed belonged to these associations. Other recommendations include the space-sharing concept where street vendors can use Mama Ngina gardens at night and other urban spaces after the formal traders do their daily business. It was observed that there are plenty of spaces within Thika town that street vendors can still use to make their trade, especially if all actors are involved.



## Acknowledgment

There is no doubt that this thesis has been a journey of inspiration and could not have been completed without God who kept me alive and dared me to take this challenge. I give him all the glory and honour. Secondly, my appreciation goes to my supervisory team led by Professor Bernard Calas and Dr. Sylvain Racaud from the University of Bordeaux Montaigne. Your relentless support and guidance right from my first contact with you and throughout this thesis are deeply appreciated. Your invaluable advice was critical both in enhancing my understanding of the subject and in providing me with additional perspectives on the study..... Merci Beaucoup! I am also grateful to Dr. Ephantus Kihonge for his advice as my initial supervisor at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I appreciate your networks that linked me to Prof. Calas and Dr. Sylvain.

I am also grateful for financial support from The French government Scholarships through their Embassy in Nairobi, without which it would not have been possible to write this thesis and travelling to Bordeaux, France. I am particularly thankful for the support I received from Campus France at both their Nairobi office and their French office in Toulouse. Grateful also for IFRA-Nairobi through the directorship of Emmanuelle and Marie-Aude without forgetting Marion together with Chloe for supporting me during my trips to France and support during my fieldwork. Thanks a lot, Claire Merdad for checking my work and for your encouragement while in Bordeaux and Kenya.

I am particularly indebted to the many street vendors in Thika town who participated in this research exercise despite the challenges that they had to endure to get time for the interviews; I hope that this study will at least make your voices heard in the process of urban management. I'm also grateful to other stakeholders like Thika Sub-county officials, supermarket managers, drivers, University/College students, market traders, and representatives of traders' associations who were part of the interview. The information they gave me, formed the basis for this thesis. Thanks a lot to all members of the Anglican Church of Bordeaux especially Christine, Nellie, Barry, Heather, Metrine, Andrien, Adebode, Pamela and Johnson, Eddy and Sarah for making my life easier while in Bordeaux. May God bless you abundantly. Much appreciation for Cousin

Kirogo, especially during the final proofreading of my thesis. To my friends and Course-mate Jackson Kago and Leah Benoit.....Ahsanteni Sana

Last and certainly not least, I owe a debt to my family and friends who have played a major part in my completing this task. To my wife Monica Wanjiku, thank you for your endless love patience and support. Her ability and willingness to assume all family responsibilities for the duration of this study have been greatly appreciated. To my daughter Ann Njeri, I'm deeply indebted for her endurance without his Dad's presence so that I could complete this thesis. To my father and mother, mentor and motivator Pastor Simon Kariuki and Zipporah Njeri, I simply cannot thank you enough; I only pray that in due course I will somehow be able to repay you! I also thank my siblings Esther, Peter, James, Ruth, and Elizabeth for always being there, you have been wonderful, God bless you all.

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## List of Acronyms

CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community-Based Organizations
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOK	Government of Kenya
IEA	International Economic Association
IFRA	Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique.
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KENASVIT	Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KSh	Kenya Shillings (Exchange Rate effective as of November 2021 €1=130)
KU	Kenyatta University
LAPSSET	Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport
MKU	Mount Kenya University
MP	Member of Parliament
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

KNCLR	Kenya National Council for Law Reporting
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NCBDA	Nairobi Central Business District Association
NCBDA	Nairobi Central Business District
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NISCOF	Nairobi Informal Sector Confederation
PPP	Public Private Partnership.
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies
SAP(s)	Structural Adjustment Programs
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TBDA	Thika Business District Alliance
TTHWA	Thika Town Hawkers Welfare Association
UN	United Nation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organising

# Chapter 1-Street vending

## 1.0 Introduction

Francis Kamau had a good and successful life laid out for him like a prestigious red carpet. He had set up a profitable photography business that made him a millionaire. In his good days in Thika, Kamau made millions. "On a bad month, I was getting like Sh. 250,000. I would make up to Sh. 1 million on a good month," he said. Beyond the millions, Kamau's line of business saw him rubbing shoulders with presidents, top government dignitaries, and operatives. Today, all his glory days are part of a troubling memory he would rather forget than spend his days reminiscing. The once-in-demand Kamau is today a street vendor selling masks for Kshs. 10<sup>1</sup> in the streets of Thika Town. "Before I started vending masks on the streets of Thika, I was in the photography business. I worked with many dignitaries, including Kenya's three Presidents," he said.

"I have worked with very many big people in the industry. I have worked with industrial giants and billionaires like Manu Chandaria and Vimal Shah of Bidco-Thika." Kamau was business mogul Manu Chandaria's photographer, and he was paid Sh. 25,000 per hour to cover his 50th wedding anniversary. He could easily pocket half a million in a day. His fall from grace began right about when he was at the peak of his photography and video editing career. However, it all changed... the day he became addicted to loans, took loans at all the banks he transacted with, and could not repay. By this time, no bank or friend wanted anything to do with him. Broke and lonely, he started washing cars in Thika at Sh. 50 per car. In 2020, he shifted business and started vending masks in the streets of Thika Town, a business he is still doing up until now to support his family.

(Bizna Kenya Online Edition, 8th October 2021)<sup>2</sup>

This case is typical of many people who get into Street vending as a "fallback" alternative when they lose their job and want to survive before getting another form of employment. Like Francis Kamau, the loss of a job can be in both formal and stable self-employment. Many sub-Saharan countries can relate to this example, especially due to the expansion of the informal sector (especially Street vending) in major cities over the past decade (Owusu, 2007). Street vending

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<sup>1</sup> Currency exchange rate in November 2021 Kshs.10 is equivalent of 0.078 Euros

<sup>2</sup> Acknowledgement to the writer, Mwova Mwende, for the story on "I was a millionaire making Sh. 1mn monthly, today I'm a street vendor selling masks in Thika", part of which is quoted here. To maintain anonymity, the name in this excerpt has been changed from the one originally used by the writer.

has absorbed a substantial section of the urban population because it provides gainful employment and an alternative for those retrenched from formal employment or for those who cannot secure them. Some reasons make it easy to venture into Street vending as a livelihood, as noted by Owusu (2007), Farrington et al. (2002), Hope (2001), ILO, (2002), Hart (1973), and these reasons include

- (i) Low starting capital and fixed costs
- (ii) Use of simple technology
- (iii) It's easy to enter into the business and exit
- (iv) One can rely on family labour and
- (v) Some find it easier because of non-payment of direct taxes.

It explains why urban spaces are associated with increasing numbers of street vendors. This chapter situates the study problem and provides a theoretical base for the following empirical chapters. The second part of this chapter reviews the literature on this subject, and some selected spatial theories, then explain the concept of Metropolisation urbanization and Globalization. The third part of chapter one deals with the methodological approaches to this study.

## **1.1 Who are street vendors?**

The Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill of Kenya (2019) defines an informal trader as people selling goods or food items daily to the public on pavements or even on parking lots.

While the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors in India (2004) defines a street vendor as individuals involved in trade to the public without a permanent shop or any form of structure but moving from one place to another, in both definitions, the temporality of the people engaged in this form of business together with their location is noted, i.e., the aspect of time and space. Street vendors take many forms; mobile vendors move their goods from one place to the other or those stationed in a particular spot like on a pavement, an alley, or even at the entry of very busy establishments like supermarkets or stadia or entry of some entertainment places. We have another category that moves from one market to another periodically. Street vendors are normally either stationery and occupy spaces in prime areas or could be mobile, moving from

one place to the other carrying their goods. The vendors may use bicycles or even carry them on their heads (Bromley, 2000; Cross, 1998; Bhowmik, 2005).

Street vendors have existed for many years; one reads accounts of traveling merchants who sold their wares in the Town by going from house to house and trading in neighboring countries (Bhowmik 2002). These multiple street vendor movements can link rural and urban areas, leading to development (Satterthwaite and Tacoli 2003; Choplin and Pliez 2015). In modern times, Street vending has provided a lot of vibrancy in cities and intermediate towns. Street vendors are market outlets and distribution agents for most of the manufactured and agricultural goods in rural and urban areas. Street vending has provided employment opportunities to large populations, especially in urban areas (Benjamin, Beegle, Recanatini, and Santini 2014). Brown (2014) notes that informal trading provides a flexible connection in economic supply chains providing the urban population with affordable goods and services conveniently.

Street vending plays a crucial role in shaping some trading routes between the Cities, intermediate towns, and rural areas in any country. The flow of goods facilitated by street vendors can connect the urban areas to the remote countryside parts (Choplin and Pliez 2015). Africa's integration within the global trade arena has allowed goods manufactured anywhere in the world to reach rural areas of most of these countries, for example, ballet slippers from China. Racaud (2015) describes how Chinese junk in Cameroon travels from Douala, the coastal metropolis, up to villages in Mont Bamboutos (West Cameroon). These multiple movements from overseas, metropolis, intermediate towns, and rural areas form a network or a web that links people, goods, and information. The movements of various actors' goods and information in urban areas introduce the concept of Metropolisation, which is linked to an increase in population, financial and production flows, and information. Lecion (2015) refers to Metropolisation as a metamorphosis of urbanization. The growth of urban areas leads to interconnections of multiple modes of transport that attract as much as they create many flows, which makes them real centers of the impetus for Globalization, as noted by Held & McGrew (2001)

The urban areas become a magnet in the territories surrounding them, which they organize more and more according to a center or periphery logic. As cities continue to grow, they still depend



on the rural areas for agricultural products, while the rural areas still depend on cities for manufactured goods. The secondary Town plays the role of interface between the rural and urban areas.

In the past, the linkage of cities and rural areas has been provided by mostly large Enterprises. Kihonge (2014) noted that small and medium enterprises have a crucial role apart from large enterprises. Another type of linkage between urban and rural areas rich in agricultural activities depended on the role of actors such as producer cooperative societies. On the reverse rural regions could depend on wholesalers moving from the urban areas to sell manufactured goods to the rural areas. Freeman and Norcliffe (1985:11) talk about the external connection that connected urban and rural areas, including a series of intermediaries or wholesalers up through the urban hierarchy or one of the large organizations. Street vendors are also important in linking the cities to the small villages in the rural areas.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The invasion of a large number of hawkers in the streets of Thika became significant in 2015, especially in the evening between 5 pm and 10 pm. The multiple mobilities of street vendors and their goods from Nairobi and its metropolitan areas to this secondary Town which was once a leading industrial center, drew some interest in this study. The exchange and the circulation of goods in Thika are extending the large Nairobi metropolitan urban spaces up to the rural areas and therefore structure a trade route between these areas (Choplin and Pliez 2015; Racaud 2016). This trade route links Nairobi, Thika towns, and the rural hinterlands between formal and informal sectors and agricultural and manufactured products. It enhances the Metropolisation process, connecting and integrating cities, secondary towns, and rural areas.

Besides their role in enhancing linkages of goods from urban to rural areas, Street vending in the informal sector continues to create more jobs than in the formal sector. According to the 2020 Economic Survey report published by the National bureau of statistics in Kenya (KNBS), the economy created 846,300 new jobs in 2019. The informal sector accounted for most of the new jobs at 767,900, while 78,400 were in the formal sector. The Kenya Vision 2030 plan indicates

that 75% of the working population is in the informal sector. Roever and Skinner (2016) note that the informal sector is growing in Sub-Saharan Africa and represents 72% of non-agricultural jobs. Djankov et al.(2002) note that informal activities include street trading and microenterprises, while Verick (2006) says these activities are majorly trade-related while services and manufacturing constitute a small percentage.

Despite their major roles in integration and creating jobs, local authorities in Thika town have targeted hawkers as illegal traders. On the other hand, residents of Thika constantly complain about how street vendors block pavements, create traffic problem, increases insecurity, and litter the pavements. Street vending is full of fears and unpredictability, but for street vendors to survive, they must take risks and continue earning their livelihood. The hawkers constantly face harassment by the local authorities, and sometimes police are hired to relocate them away from their chosen urban locations (McGee and Yeung, 1977; Smart, 1989; Brown and Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Lloyd-Jones and Carmona, 2002). These operations result in crackdowns, eviction drives, and confiscating of vendors' commodities. Kinyanjui (2010) notes that a local Government's raid is like a cat-and-mouse game chasing street vendors away from the streets. Confiscation entails heavy fines for the recovery of goods. Sometimes vendors prefer not to pick them back but instead buy new stock by taking loans from private sources or financial institutions to restart their business. Besides sudden raids, street vendors normally have to bribe the authorities to continue their business (Mitullah 2003). Hawkers spend a lot of money bribing the local authority's enforcement officers and the police. According to Africa's uncensored media (2018), some corrupt local authority officers collect bribes of around \$ 1 million a month from thousands of hawkers in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi.

Therefore, this research is about Street vending, pavement politics, and Metropolisation in the context of Thika town (secondary Town) found within the Nairobi metropolitan region. It explores the rivalries of power for access to streets, private appropriation of public spaces, and streets as economic and political resources. The rivalries are not only between the hawkers and the local authorities but also between market traders who claim the right to the City of Thika. The movement of street vendors from other towns to Thika has increased the tension with the local street vendors. It also focuses on how Street vending construct a trade route linking Nairobi

city, Thika Town, and its rural hinterland through flows of street vendors and their goods. During their mobility and livelihood diversification, street vendors interact with various actors and face regulatory frameworks that affect their activities. The research also looks at the local scale's territorial dynamics, i.e., streets in Thika and metropolitan scales (Nairobi-Thika and rural hinterlands) brought about by street vending flows.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

This research analyses how Street vending, pavement politics, its regulation, and various actors influence the Metropolisation process and the linkage between Thika town and its hinterlands. The research will address the following issues.

- i) To determine the extent to which street vending flow contributes to Metropolisation and the linkage between Thika town and its hinterland.
- ii) To find out how regulation of street trading affects Metropolisation and the linkage between Thika town and its hinterland.
- iii) To find out the actors in this street vendors' flow, their contributions to Metropolisation, and the linkage between Thika town and its hinterland.

#### **1.3.1 Research questions**

- i) To what extent does the street vendors' flow contribute to Metropolisation and the linkage between Thika towns and its hinterland?
- ii) To what extent does the regulation of street trading affect Metropolisation and the linkage between Thika Town and its hinterland?
- iii) Who are the actors in this street vendors' flow and their contributions to Metropolisation and the linkage between Thika towns and its hinterland?

### **1.3.2 Justification of the Study**

Thika town has been experiencing a high rate of urbanization due to the rapid commercial, educational and residential development due to factors. One of the main ones is upgrading the Thika superhighway, which increased its connectivity to the capital Nairobi. It has led to an increased population, especially for people who have relocated to Thika, as land and rent are lower than in the capital. It has necessitated the trickle-down of some services and functions to Thika, which is about 40km from Nairobi and also connected to the LAPSSET (Lamu Port, South Sudan, and Ethiopia Transport) corridor Isiolo. Thika is connected to neighboring countries like Ethiopia and Sudan to the North. Thika is also connected to Eastern and North Eastern parts of Kenya and some extent, Somali. All these road connections and even the recent revival of a railway connection to Nairobi and Nanyuki have increased Thika's population due to the multiple movements to and from this secondary Town. Thika town is a "door" or "gate" of Kenya from Central, Northern, Eastern, North-eastern, and coast provinces to the capital city of Nairobi. This strategic position places Thika as one of the most accessed towns in Kenya. Economically, it has increased demand for public goods such as urban spaces in the CBD of Thika town resulting in high populations during day and night-time of commuters and residents. Thika in Kiambu county is one of those towns referred to as the "bedroom" of Nairobi, as most people who work in Nairobi during the day reside in Thika. The increased population in Thika town translates to increased commercial activities, which increases revenues for the Town. Formal institutions such as learning institutions, banks, and service-based industries, together with Informal activities such as Street vending, have taken advantage of these dynamics in Thika to establish them.

Hence this study on street vending flows and the Metropolisation of Thika town is very significant in understanding how such activities can be integrated into the urban system. The current conflicts between street vendors and the sub-county government have not been sorted out completely due to the crackdowns that are still persistent in the Town. This study intends to show the importance of Street vending, the contributions of different actors, and how regulations of street vendors have continued to affect this informal activity in the CBD. This study intends to propose alternative sites for Street vending in Thika town and propose ways in which both

formal and informal enterprises can use the same urban space. It might reduce the tensions and conflicts between different actors like County governments, private land owners, formal enterprises, street vendors, and their associations. In the long run, this study will be very important in understanding how informal activities can be integrated into urban systems, especially by the planning department. This study can be replicated in other secondary and intermediate towns in Kenya

#### **1.4 Working definitions of key concepts**

**Street-** A Street is defined differently depending on where it is applied. According to Kenya's Planning and Building Regulations (2009), a street is a road lined with buildings, including avenues, crescents, cul-de-sacs, alleys, closes, courts, places, lanes, and drives. While according to the Local Government by-laws of 1968, A street may also refer to any highway, road, or service lane, or any land reserved for a highway, road, or service lane, and includes any bridge, footway, square, court, alley or passage, whether a thoroughfare or not(Moriango 2017). From these definitions, a street is a route one may use to access different places in Urban or rural areas whether the person is on foot on a Boda Boda. Streets, thus, connect people for interaction and are the lifeblood of communities in urban economies, according to Moriango (2017) as cited from Urban Street Design Guide (2013 ).In the context of this thesis, streets and pavements will be treated as synonymous

**Street Vendor-**Is an individual who deals with selling goods or offering services without necessarily having a permanent building or short-term static structure or mobile stall (Indian Street vending bill 2014), while Tuju (2019) defines a street vendor as a self-employed individual participating in legal but unregulated economic activities which are unregistered, self-governing enterprises, undercapitalized and labour intensive part-time or full-time activities.

**Informal sector-**According to the ILO(2002), the informal sector consists of an individual/household who partakes full or part-time in a small enterprise informally owned, requiring informal skills which are undercapitalized and labor-intensive with flexibility between customers and suppliers applying simple technologies and multi-use of assets to realize profits thus having a potential of becoming an important contributor to National Economy. This thesis

will treat the informal sector and informal economy synonymously. On the other hand, Chen (2012) looks at this sector as an enterprise that is neither legally regulated nor with employment relations that are legally regulated or protected

**Prime location for street vending**-According to Barbere (2015), this is a location within a city or agglomeration where a business might expect to achieve the highest profit relative to any other place and therefore is in the very best position of demand from prospective occupiers.

These areas may include streets, sidewalks and pavements, urban open space, road reserves and junctions, public bus terminals, and markets in the central business district (*ibid*). In the context of this thesis, we will consider the definition according to Babere (2015)

**Livelihoods**-This consist of the activities undertaken by traders meant to meet their daily needs, such as making profits. According to Babere (2015), Livelihoods can be defined as how people satisfy their requirements or gain a living and are shaped by goals, preferences, and constraints of individuals, households, communities, and society, as cited in (Chambers and Conway 1992) as cited in (Scoones, 1998:5). In the context of this research, the livelihood activities will entail all the activities that are undertaken by both street vendors and market traders in Thika town.

**Public space and urban space** –these terms, by definition, are almost the same and will be treated as the same in this thesis. Low & Smith (2006) notes that in the definition of public space, the urban remains the privileged scale of analysis and cities the privileged site. Harvey (1995) defines urban space as different forms and characters taken by space in the City as a product of the social processes which occur over continuous historical periods. In comparison, Madanipour (1999) defines urban space as all buildings, objects, and spaces in urban areas and the people, events, and relationships within them. Moriango (2017) outlines urban public space as physical locations such as the square, pavement, sidewalk, boulevard, promenade, esplanade, plaza, piazza, park, playground, mall, arcade, and market as cited by Brown (2006). Generally, these

definitions of public/urban space capture the relationship between objects and the social aspect of this space where social interactions and political activities occur. Therefore it is a place where informal activities such as Street vending take place.

**Metropolisation** is defined as a spatial process in a territory that changes social, economic, and cultural relations as urban dynamics Moura and Firkowski (2001). Metropolisation is a shaping agent that brings vitality to the production of urban space. These processes take place in the territory changing social, economic, and cultural relations

**According to Held & McGrew (2001), globalization is a process that** represents a change in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, stated in transcontinental or interregional flows and systems of activity, interface, and power.

**Urbanization** is a phenomenon of the increase of the urban population and the transformation of rural space into urban space under the influence of cities. Obutho (2000) emphasizes this by noting that it entails migration from rural areas and engaging in Non-agricultural activities.

**Linkages** refer to the relationship between entities such as urban areas and rural areas or formal and informal economic sectors. The links between urban and rural areas are identified as four different types. These are understood as flows of people, information, finances, goods, and services (Tacoli, 2004). On the other hand, Tuju (2019), as cited from Chen (2012), argues that a small number of informal enterprises operate in total segregation from formal markets and that most look for raw materials or completed goods from formal firms either directly or through transitional firms which are often informal. In this thesis, the focus is on these two types of linkages, either Urban areas-Rural/Hinterlands or between Formal and informal enterprises

## **1.5 Literature Review**

The literature examines academic debates around the key theme of this research, namely, Street vending, pavement politics, and the Metropolisation process in Thika town. The section develops a theoretical review, conceptual framework, and empirical review that will be used in this study. The review will identify research gaps to be filled.

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is a collection of existing theories from literature, which reinforces a conceptual framework and subsequently informs the problem statement (Mugenda, 2008). The study reflects on theories on informal trading activities, specifically Street vending and the Metropolisation process. The theories help us understand different authors' arguments on the street vending flows and the other actors in this flow. It will also reveal the theoretical framework of this study. This section describes key terms such as Metropolisation and street vendors in the light of other key concepts such as Globalization, urbanization, and other theories that will explain the movements of street vendors from the City, secondary towns, and rural areas.

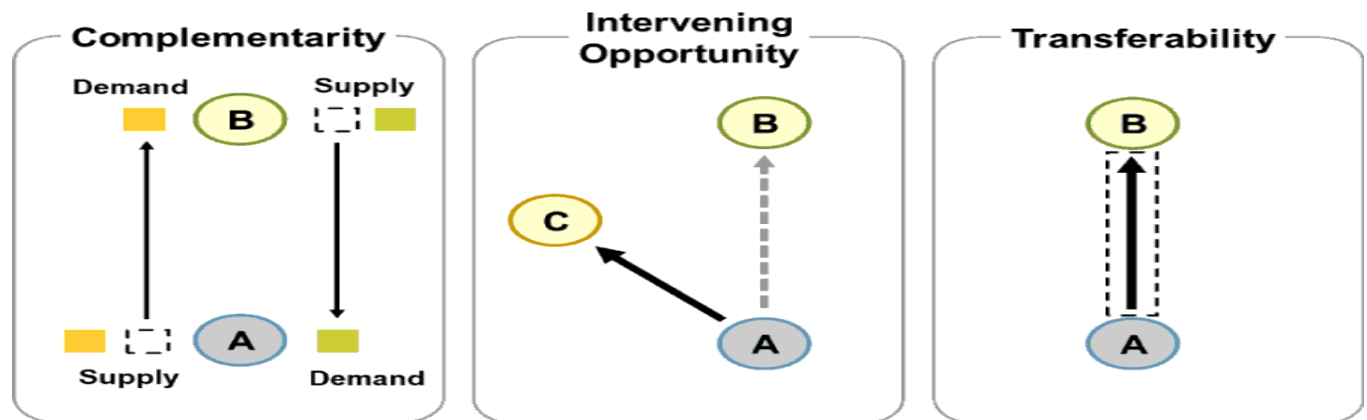
#### **1.5.1.1 Spatial interaction theory**

The spatial interaction theory becomes relevant in this thesis because it considers the issue of flows in space and the actors involved. These flows involve much mobility, especially in an urban area frequented by traders and consumers of goods and services. Infrastructure also plays a very important role as far as this flows and actors are concerned

Various researchers explain spatial theory in different ways. Rodrigues (2017) looks at it as a process of movement from one place to the in response to localized supply and demand. The theory describes spatial interaction as a realized movement of people, goods, or information between an origin and a destination where there is a transport demand/supply relationship expressed over geographical space. It highlights three fundamental conditions which must be met: complementarity, intervening opportunity, and Transferability. It is explained diagrammatically in Figure 1 using the three conditions as described by Rodrigues (2017)



Figure 1 *Conditions for Spatial Interaction*



(Source: Rodriguez 2017)

Regarding complementarity, Rodriguez argues that if location A produces/generates something that location B requires, then the interaction is possible because a supply/demand relationship has been established between those two locations; they have become complementary. The same applies in the other direction (B to A), which creates a situation of **reciprocity** common in commuting. For an Intervening opportunity, he says that if location C offers similar characteristics (namely complementarity) to location B and is also closer to location A, an interaction between A and B will not occur and will be replaced by an interaction between A and C. An intervening opportunity can also be **partial**, as only a part of the interaction is captured. Finally, he says that transport infrastructures (modes and terminals) must be present for transferability to support an interaction between A and B. In addition, these infrastructures must have a capacity and availability compatible with the requirements of such an interaction.

This context seems to explain the situation in an urban area, especially a secondary Town, which can supply some of the items to the surrounding hinterland. For example, some secondary towns can provide manufactured products while their hinterland can supply agricultural commodities. It creates demand and supply from both sides of the divide, making the aspect of reciprocity. For intervening opportunity, sometimes a secondary town, which is nearer, may be preferred more than a city, especially if it offers nearly similar functions to those of the City. One will feel like it is cheaper to visit the secondary Town and therefore save the cost of transportation associated

with longer distances. For intervening opportunity, a town that is well connected by infrastructure is likely to experience lots of spatial interaction due to its accessibility to various modes of transport.

### **Relevance of spatial Theory**

Spatial interaction theory is relevant to this research and not only to physical geographers. It covers various forms of social, economic and political aspects when looked from the human geography perspective. It covers different mobilities such as market areas of retailing activities which can well explain some livelihood aspects of street vending. Street vendors are forms the biggest proportion of retailers. As the theory covers mobilities which can be physical i.e. passengers and freight or intangible i.e. information, the same can be applicable to social and economic perspective as movement of people with their products has economic perspective. Passing of any information is very crucial for trading to take place as far as markets are concerned. Spatial interaction theories are relevant to this study because they easily relate to the street traders who move from metropolitan cities to secondary Towns and rural areas. In the Thika and Nairobi context, traders are attracted to Thika for less strictness by local authorities and the hinterlands- access to Thika due to good infrastructure. The Theories can also easily predict situations in the future.

### **1.6 Metropolisation**

According to Webster's Dictionary (2021), the metropolis is a Greek word. Metro in ancient Greek means a mother city, derived from 'meter'- mother, and 'polis'- City (Mother + City). Therefore the whole meaning is the mother city (concerning colonies); the chief City of a kingdom. The logic here is that the mother city rules the surrounding cities or territories. Derycke (1999) notes that a metropolis should be understood concerning the colonies it governs. While Bassand (2001) argues that the metropolis comprises a large city, one may not necessarily quantify its size. A metropolis is often an extensive and diverse city whose population depends on the period under review; for example, in the past (the 1800s), a population of 50,000 people in a city was considered a metropolis, while at the moment, 500,000 people were considered a metropolis. Gaschet and Lacour (2002) argue that Metropolises can be determined by their

ability to attract, organize, filter, and disseminate an increasing number of goods, people, and information flows.

A city will develop into a metropolis when its spatial scale of coordination grows beyond its local scale and the hinterland of the City. A hinterland is an area that surrounds a city and therefore interacts a lot with the central place, which is the City. In many countries (especially Europe) with developed metropolis, the central command comes from the City and cascades down to the hinterland. A metropolis creates long-term interactions and networks with the nearby town, influencing them economically and socially. Such interactions and networks systems developed according to Hohenberg (2002) bring to focus the Central-Place theory, which highlights the importance and potential success of the spatial organization of entities, the distribution of urban and rural areas, the transportation for consumers, and the locating of the products and services. More populated regions offer more of a concentrated area for products and services.

In the article "le concept de la Metropolisation," Aguibetova (2006) notes that Metropolisation refers to a global movement or a set of dynamic processes that transforms a city into a metropolis. The concept of Metropolisation seems to be European-centered, especially in France, where it is commonly used. Metropolisation is a process of concentration of command functions (political, economic, and cultural) and higher tertiary functions in a small number of cities, which are highly attractive to populations, according to the Lelivrescolaire website 2019. Moura and Firkowski (2001) define Metropolisation as a spatial process that takes place in a territory and changes social, economic, and cultural relations as urban dynamics

Metropolisation considers the influence of an urban center on the surrounding urban and rural areas. The political, economic, and cultural impact normally exchanges from the big cities, secondary towns, and rural areas. These exchanges create the flow of people, goods, and information, especially from urban areas connected to multiple modes of transport (Journal Géoconfluences 2020). The metropolitan areas (or the metropolis) become a magnet to the territories surrounding them, bringing populations that make them real centers of the impetus for Globalization.

### **1.6.1 Metropolisation, Urbanization, and Globalization**

As Aguibetova (2006) noted, Metropolisation is a global movement incorporating issues of Globalization and urbanization. Held et al. (2001) argues that Globalization is widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing the impact of worldwide interconnectedness. Globalization looks at the concept of Metropolisation from a broader perspective of the regional issue and worldwide. Globalization has increased the flow of goods and services and strengthened the weight of metropolises, increasing their command functions.

In the article "Urban disorder in Luanda, Angola" by Castro et al. (2018), Metropolisation is the result of an accelerated urbanization process intensified by demographic growth, built-up areas, the intensification of socio-economic exchanges, the complexities of mobility systems based on modes of circulation and informal transport. On the other hand, urbanization is a phenomenon of increased urban population and the transformation of rural space into urban space under the influence of cities. In summary, the terms Metropolisation, Globalization, and Urbanization are intertwined.

According to Lecion (2015), Metropolisation is a metamorphosis of the urbanization process, especially when it originates as a regionalization action. The emphasis is that a metamorphosis removes the traditional characteristics and develops new relations between capitalist society and object space. Moura (2009) looks at Metropolisation as a more evolved phase of urbanization, highlighting a new era. Like urbanization, Metropolisation is linked to an increase in population, financial and production flows, and information.

Metropolisation as a shaping agent brings vitality to the production of urban space. These processes occur in the territory changing social, economic, and cultural relations. In developing countries such as Kenya, influences of historical and social-cultural context, political/economic relations, and daily urban dynamics sustained in informality are the drivers of the Metropolisation process.

Ghorra-Gobin, (2010) notes that Regional geographers and economists describe Metropolisation as a process that includes both spatial concentration and polarization linked to the intensification of the flows of Globalization. Ghorra-Gobin notes that there is a connection between

Metropolisation and Globalization when the dynamics of Metropolisation are defined as the "spatial and sub-national version of globalization." In this context, Metropolisation is a synonym for "glocalization." Velt (2005) argues that the main objective of Metropolisation is to ensure diversification to avoid any economic decline brought about by a variety of interactions. Sassen (1991) notes that when the Metropolisation process entails economic coordination, social cohesion, and global regulation, the metropolis can become a "global city." Sassen goes on to emphasize that the diversification of the global city region can contribute to the networking of metropolises.

The global city status comes with its challenges for the metropolis. Campagni and Gibelli (1996) outline the three challenges as quoted by Aguibetova (2006) (1) The challenge of Globalization, which is mainly linked to the integration process of international goods and services. (2) The challenge of sustainability, and (3) the challenge of cohesion. Kihonge & Mainet (2014) note that the Metropolisation process tends to weaken the lower level of urban hierarchy because most decisions are made in metropolitan Areas.

### **1.6.2 Metropolisation from above**

Metropolisation has been noted as a structuring agent that brings dynamism to the production of urban space in the previous chapters. The process takes place in the territory changing social, economic, and cultural relations. In some cases, as Moura and Firkowski (2001) explain, it can also be just an institutional conception and merely administrative or of economic interest that does not converge to the real transformation of socio-spatial conditions. Santos (2000) argues that in developing countries, urban space production is mainly based on the dynamics and socio-spatial processes embedded in the global capitalistic logic of manipulation of territories.

Most of the Metropolisation processes, especially urban plans, are done with the aspirations of postmodern and neoliberal urban development brought about by the pressures of Globalization. Castro and Reschilian (2019) give an example of the Luanda metropolitan process as one characterized by the concern of selling utopia urbanity in a developing city with a great potential for international trade, then with the actual development of its population who are living in inhuman conditions. Castro and Reschilian insist the Metropolisation plan must be a social and

political process with broader popular participation in which planning is not top-down (Metropolisation from above) but a consensus between two orders that form the space, i.e., formal and informal. When the participation involves all the actors, it gives rise to a hybrid space or a socio-spatial logic which is part of the daily dynamics of production and structuring of space in most cities in developing countries.

Oliveira (2015) insists that most of the structural order of space in developing countries is full of contradictions that use neoliberal capitalist to engender planning but are centralized in its form of control, redistribution, and accumulation. When governments are pressured to adopt neoliberal plans by other interested agents like private firms and international organizations in the process of Metropolisation, we can refer to this as Metropolisation from above. In Kenya, like many other African countries, cities are meant to be of international standards; therefore, informal activities like Street vending are not accommodated.

Since Metropolisation and Globalization are related in several ways, it is important to discuss the concept of Globalization from above. Margaret C. Lee (2014), in her book *"Africa's world trade: Informal economies and globalization from below,"* describes the two concepts well to differentiate between Metropolisation from above and below.

### **1.6.3 Globalization from above**

Globalizations from above are institutions that control or have authority and interest in neoliberal capitalism, as noted by Ribeiro (2012). The agents in this system include states, multinational corporations, private firms, international financial institutions, and global governing institutions (Mathews and Alba Vega 2012; Peet 2010). With a Keen look at these agents, one can tell of the rich and the powerful individuals together with institutions that control the world order. Lee (2014) notes that global governance institutions are agents within a hegemonic world system and often attempt to place restrictions on Globalization from below. These global governance institutions usually have a neoliberal ideology referred to as hegemonic Globalization, which can be traced by compiling formal information and other economic indicators (Ribeiro 2012). There is a lot of bureaucracy and formalization at this level of Globalization, with the main actors projecting a sense of having a monopoly of legality and legitimacy in economic transactions.

Actors who are not formalized at this stage are thought to be informal and therefore operating from below. Peet (2010), on the other hand, puts the whole dialogue of Globalization from above under the framework of institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, which seems to control global trade.

#### **1.6.4 Globalization from below**

It is the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital, often semi-legal or illegal transactions (Mathews and Alba Vega 2012). Most people experience this type of Globalization though it is mostly associated with the developing world. Another term associated with Globalization below is the informal economy or non-hegemonic Globalization, as noted by Ribeiro (2012). The agents associated with Globalization from below include street vendors, international migrants, traders, and other Small entrepreneurs. These agents can sometimes have a complementary or contradictory relationship with the agents of Globalization from above, making these two systems inseparable (Mathews and Alba Vega 2012).

Agents of Globalization from below are associated with sell of cheap products that would otherwise be expensive to most of the urban poor. Unfortunately, some of these cheap goods are associated with contraband goods, which have a short lifespan. The agents of Metropolisation from above associate these products as illegal or smuggled, as some may be counterfeit and untaxed. The informal economy also creates employment for millions of jobless people, especially in developing countries. International labour organization (2013) estimates that 73% of the non-agricultural sectors are working informally, and these estimates can vary in different parts of the world.

The agents of the informal economy normally face several challenges in their pursuit to make a living. The informal traders encounter challenges like displacements due to the construction of beautification projects in public spaces and urban developments like public transport. The vendors are also deprived of city services and public amenities like water, sanitation, waste removal storage, and storage facilities. Street vendors are sometimes not involved as part of the urban landscape and therefore find negotiating the policy and regulation processes challenging.

### **1.6.5 Secondary towns**

Secondary or intermediate towns are no longer defined by population size but by their functionality and connectivity with global and national systems. The intermediate towns have become the subject of renewed interest from scholars and international development organizations (Roberts 2014). Secondary towns are evolving as the engine behind the rapid urbanization being experienced in most countries today. As congestion becomes a major concern in moving around major cities, entrepreneurs seek alternative places to locate their businesses. National infrastructure systems are connected to secondary towns making them grow rapidly as every entrepreneur sets them as bases for their enterprises.

In Africa, secondary towns play a crucial role as distribution centers for goods between rural areas and cities (Racaud and Mainet (2015). These intermediate towns are nodes of connection between the hinterlands, National and sometimes international markets. Being gateways to rural areas, manufactured goods and imported goods from other countries find their way through the intermediate towns. Choplin& Pliez (2015) notes that secondary towns are dominated by major cities but are inconspicuous areas that enable invisible Globalization to become structured and function. The intermediate towns, to which researchers sometimes give less attention, have become important in globalization because of their ability to integrate urban and rural areas.

The location of secondary towns between the rural areas and major cities places them on the major trade routes accelerating their development. The secondary or intermediate towns are not only commercial centers but also act as administrative areas, service centers, and places of social and economic interactions (Racaud and Mainet, 2015). Thika becomes a town of interest in this research because it is a distribution center for most of the goods that move to its hinterland and also for goods from Nairobi, which is only 40km away.

### **1.6.6 Secondary towns and Metropolisation**

Because of their crucial role as nodes of connection between the hinterlands, National and sometimes international markets, there is an increasing number of street vendors in secondary towns. Street vendors have found a way of not only selling affordable goods to their customers but also how to procure cheap items from rural areas, cities, and international markets under the



tight government radar. Through inconspicuous spaces, street vendors can connect to different trade routes and distribute their goods. Like globalization from below, street vendors are hypothesized to be the main actors in connecting the metropolitan areas with their hinterlands. They do this by forming international trade routes between global cities, metropolis, secondary towns, and even rural areas. The spaces in metropolitan areas and their hinterlands can extend even globally, changing the commodities, culture, and information due to the street vendors who appropriate these spaces.

The intermediate towns, which other stakeholders have long ignored, have given room to street vendors to undertake their activities without the harshness and strictness faced by their colleagues in big cities. The commercial functions performed by street vendors have become the driving force of the invisible urbanization of these intermediate towns. Racaud et al. (2015) note that street vendors in secondary cities are vectors of new ideas as they contribute to evolving local identities in towns and rural areas.

#### **1.6.7 Selected studies on Street vending in Kenya**

Racaud, Owuor, and Kago (2018) conducted a study on "Contested Street: Informal Street Vending and its Contradictions-case of Thika and Dar es Salaam." Racaud et al. (2018) show the contradiction between the socio-economic contributions of street trading against a very hostile legal framework. The irony is that despite the ability of Street vending to create lots of job opportunities, the by-law does not fully support them to operate. The contradiction is even noted when some sessional papers allow informal activities to be undertaken while the local authorities still apply the colonial by-laws (Morange 2015). Street vendors look unorganized, but it is contradictory for most people, as Racaud et al. (2018) found out many of these vendors are organized. Some have even started income-generating activities like real estate. This thesis borrows a lot from their research, especially talking about the contradictions of laws between the National Government and the County Government. The study is also conducted in Thika, bringing many similarities to this research.

Pierre Schlegel (2018) researched Kenya's street vending and local governance". Schlegel notes that its cyclic aspect characterizes the Governance of Thika Town. All this is made possible by

the adaptability of local legal and institutional bodies within the Town. The study notes that, unfortunately, the local politicians exploit this opportunity to use the ambiguity of the situation of informal trade to reaffirm their clientele links. The research discovers that the Street and the informal traders are seen as an electoral resource during the election period. Therefore there is a disappearance of the regulating or eviction tools used by the local government. It makes Street vending valid up to the time when those politicians are elected and sworn in. Schlegel's study setup is similar to this thesis, especially on how local authorities deal with street vendors.

Lubaale and Nyang'oro (2013) studied The Informal Economy Monitoring Study of the urban informal economy in Nakuru Town. The study found that urban policies and other driving forces related to the city influence street vendors' working conditions. Harassment on the part of city authorities and a lack of space for vending accounted for more than half of the problems mentioned by the focus groups. Vendors reported that harassment often entails or leads to arrests, confiscations of merchandise, and demands for bribes, which reduce the earnings on which their households negatively. This study, like many others on the subject of informality, addresses the common issues and more so on big cities; therefore, in our current study, we go further and interrogate the motivation behind street vendors' inflow in Thika Town's CBD, which is a secondary town.

Hussein Opari (2011) studied Street Hawking and its Impacts on Nairobi Central Business District Urban Space. The study established that street vending in Kenya is a source of livelihood for many Nairobians and a stepping stone towards better and permanent jobs in the future. The study is relevant to our current studies because it also focuses on street vending activities in the secondary Town and the reasons for these vendors moving from the City. Morange (2015) undertook a study on Street trade, neo-liberalization, and control of urban space in Nairobi. The study gives an account of various regulations and policies since independence. Morange analyses features of the current policies controlling street vending. The study shows how a private association, and the city authorities, devised a way of relocating thousands of street vendors to a new market. Morange analyses how private sector involvement excludes the opinions of the street vendor while engaging the local authorities. Morange's study is relevant to our current studies, especially with the private sector involvement in the flow of street vendors in the City. In

Nairobi, this private sector involves NCBDA, while in Thika, TDBA and the continuity of colonial laws/policies applied by the Thika sub-county authority.

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

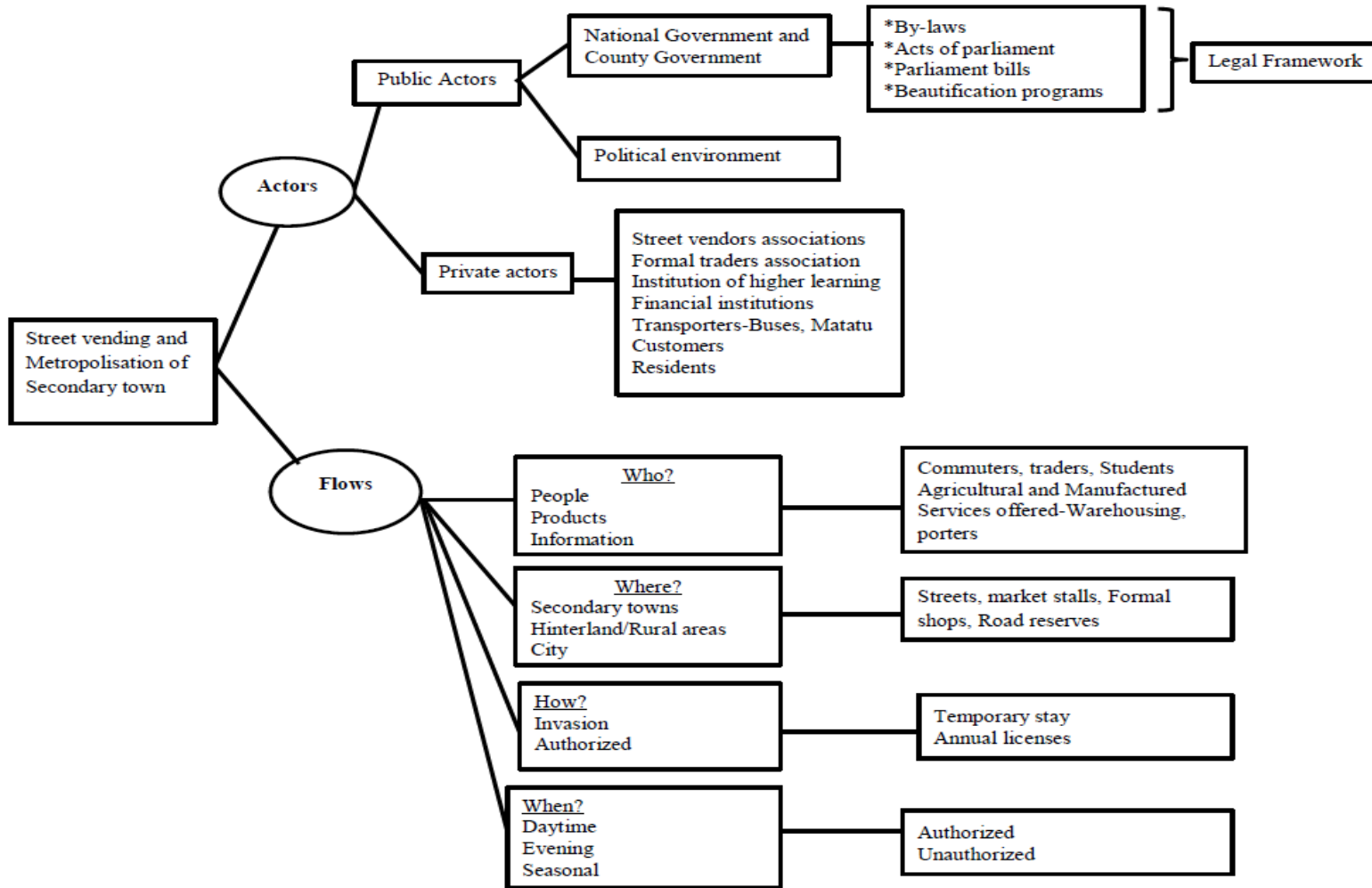
A conceptual framework seeks to capture the main components of Metropolisation and street vending flows. The conceptual model cannot claim to be exhaustive. Inevitably, any framework is an oversimplification of a complex reality and should be treated merely as a guide or lens through which to view the world (Rakodi2006). This study is concerned with the Flow of street vendors in Kenya. The conceptual framework can be represented diagrammatically in figure 2.

The conceptual framework depicts the Metropolisation process through informal activities such as Street vending. Part of this process entails two major components: the actors and the flows involved in the Street vending activities. Lacoux (2019), Metropolisation is a spatially selective process that favors the most efficient spaces connected to the different networks. Served by multiple modes of transport, they attract as much as they create many flows (of goods, people, information), which makes them real centers of the impetus for globalization. Therefore, we need to conceptualize the component of Flows, which is an important aspect as far as Metropolisation is concerned. The concept of flows is meant to address one of our research questions: (i) to what extent does the street vendors' flow contributes to Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and their hinterland? The component of flows brings into perspective the following:

### **FLOWS**

i) What is flowing?-People, products, and information. The indicators here are the population of the people living in the secondary Town. In this thesis, we focused on the population of Thika town and the population that migrates to this Town during the day and leave in the evening. Some of these people include street vendors from the surrounding towns, including Nairobi, and those who come from the rural areas of Thika and appropriate the streets of CBD in the evening. The other people are the passengers who either come to Thika to work and return home in the evening or use Thika town as transit on their way home.

Figure 2 *Conceptual Framework*



(Source: Author 2020)

Under the same questions of who is flowing, we have an aspect of the products involved in this flow. From the flows, we can differentiate the various features of the goods as either perishable or durable and the seasons for the products flows, and then we check on the kind of information that is flowing

ii) Where the flows mainly occur-aspect of linkages, directions, and distances covered. The indicators here will be the linkages between Thika town and other towns, which are the sources of the goods. Some of the sources of the goods to Thika come as far as Tanzania, Burundi, Malawi, and Ethiopia, while goods from Thika find their way as far as Somalia.

iii) How the flows happen in terms of the scale, frequency, and patterns-The indicators here are the scales /Hierarchy of the flow, its frequency, and patterns of the flow. Some flows are measured against the number of trips made per day, week, or month.

iv) When do they happen in terms of season or time of the day or night? The indicator here will be the preferred time for the flows. Some flows happen early in the mornings, while others are late in the evening and at night. In contrast, others happen during different seasons, such as the festive seasons, like the Christmas holidays, while others are during the back-to-school seasons, and others are during political events, such as the electioneering/campaigning period. Another crucial season is the pre-election period. Generally, the elections cycle brings a very different flow, especially for the people and the times of the flows.

v) Why the Flows?-Are the flows purely commercial, or are some for social purposes? The indicators here will be specifically the purpose of the flows, as some are purely for commercial purposes. In contrast, others are for social purposes, for example, flows of religious grouping to Thika town or tourists moving to tourist attractions in Thika town. Other social flows include sporting or graduation events in the institutions of higher learning in Thika town.

The conceptual framework's second component looks at the actors in the urban spaces. Street vendors are among the main actors in this process as far as this thesis is concerned, but other actors also come into play in the whole process. This component tries to address the second and third research questions. ii) To what extent does the regulation of street trading affect

Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and their hinterland? iii) Who are the actors in this street vendors' flow and their contributions to Metropolisation and the linkage between Secondary towns and their hinterland?

## **ACTORS**

Various actors come into play on the issues of Street vending and Metropolisation. The actors may be public or private based on internal and external influence. The government has an external impact directly affects how business is conducted. Therefore, one must comply with the rules and regulations or suffer the consequences. The influence can have positive and negative aspects, especially when implemented; therefore, one is not given a choice over them. In this context, the main actor is the vendors in the Street of Thika town because they form the unit of analysis in this thesis. According to this thesis, the public actor is the Government and the political environment. The government here represents all the two levels, i.e., the National and the County Governments, which influence Street vending in a major way, especially with their regulations that control how a city or a town should be governed. Some of the by-laws enacted by the former municipal and Town councils and some which have been in operation since colonial times continue to affect how informal activities are carried out in the urban spaces of cities and towns. The new constitution, which took effect in 2010, brought in the County government, which has brought many changes politically and socially in the counties. Still, some have continued to maintain the status quo as far as these by-laws are concerned. The National government has not devolved all its functions to the county governments' which means that it has a lot of influence on what is happening in the informal sector.

There are ambiguities in the legislation applied by the National and County governments, especially when dealing with the informal sector. Racaud (2018) notes that local authority by-laws contradict policies such as Vision 2030, which identifies the informal sector as an important area in job creation. Therefore contradictions between the national Acts of Parliament and local authority by-laws – often lead to conflicts between street traders and city authorities. Racaud argues that Kenya's vision 2030 recognizes that the informal sector and micro-enterprises should be supported. Therefore, in this context, the National Government may realize the importance of Street vending in creating jobs. Still, the county or sub-county government implementing the by-

laws on the urban space may hold a different opinion as they ban Street vending in the urban spaces. Regulations that have been put in place by the government and the legal framework that governs urban spaces form a critical issue that needs to be discussed in this thesis, and that is why it forms an objective of this research. Therefore, the third objective of this research will be to find out how regulations affect street vendors and the Metropolisation process.

Another actor included as a public actor is a Political environment such as elections, which in Kenya come every five years. Political activities, such as campaigns during the elections, affect Street vending on different scales. During the electioneering period (a few months before an election and on Election Day), street vendors are "allowed" to do their business freely without limitations, provided they pledge allegiance to a certain politician or affiliation to certain political parties. This mutual relationship ends after the elections, and the street traders have to wait for another period of up to five years or a by-election, whichever comes first.

The other categories of actors are private actors. They have internal influence, meaning street vendors have room to negotiate their impact substantially, unlike when dealing with the Government of the day. These actors influence how street vendors conduct their business, especially their movements to the streets and where they source their goods (Transporters). Financial Institution-Banks and Microfinance influence how they get capital to run their businesses. Other actors include institutions of higher learning like universities and colleges, with customers and street vendors. Some of the students in these institutions have also taken up street vending as part-time jobs, which enables them to meet their basic needs while in school. Wholesalers, retailers, brokers, and supermarkets are other actors with unique influences. Wholesalers play the role of supplying goods to street vendors, especially from the source of the products. These wholesalers may also play the role of brokers. Retailers, on the other hand, are competitors to street vendors, and most of them own registered shops in urban areas or may also be traders in formal markets. Supermarkets are large-scale retailers, and in the case of Thika, some of them usually witness street vendors crowded to their main doors as they reach out to customers entering or leaving these Shops. They sometimes complement each other by serving the same customers

Another Actor influencing the street vending process is the customers/buyers, who consist of passengers or any other person moving within the urban spaces of Thika. Included in this category are the inhabitants of Thika. Some of these inhabitants may be in support, against, or indifferent about the invasion of Thika by street vendors. It is an important category because these are mainly the taxpayers in Thika town. Real estate owners or private Landlords may influence who utilizes the urban space during the day. The media also affect the flow of people and products within the Town. Different groups have used media to report on the happenings within the urban space. At times, politicians or other interested groups may be used

Street vendor associations, perhaps, are also major actors, as they are formed to check on the welfare of their main client, the hawker. An example includes KENASVIT, which has its membership in Thika, and the likes of Thika Town Vendors Ltd. Other associations formed by the formal business people influence how business activities are conducted in the Town, and a good example is Thika District Business Association (TDBA).

## **1.8 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis consists of six chapters, as shown in Figure 3. Chapters One and Two provide an understanding of the research context, literature, and methodology used in this study. Chapters Three to five provide us with the context within which the study was being undertaken and an examination of the different actors. This chapter answers the objectives of this study and the questions. It also focuses on the flow of goods and the appropriation of space in Thika, together with the data collected and its analysis data collected. Chapter 6 provides conclusions and recommendations arising from the research findings.

**Chapter 1:** This chapter has three major sections. The first section introduces the research topic, street vending, and the research questions and objectives. The section also introduces the research problem.

The second section of this chapter introduces literature on some of the concepts used in this thesis, like Metropolisation, globalization, and urbanization, since they have many implications



as far as Street vending is concerned. The chapter also conceptualizes this thesis's main components: the actors involved, the flows of products, people, and information alongside the legal framework. This section aims to understand these concepts to build an argument on how different actors and regulations influence street vending flows.

The third section of this chapter outlines the methodological approach deployed to collect data and answer the various questions raised. The section clarifies the reasons for carrying out this study in Thika Town, specifically Commercial Street, as the units of analysis. In addition, this section describes the data sets collected and the methods used for collecting, such as interviews and direct observation alongside documentary analysis. Lastly, the section describes how the data was analyzed, including the limitations and challenges the researcher encountered in undertaking this research in the field.

**Chapter 2:** Thika Town Context: Urbanization, informality, and legal framework establish the context of this thesis to which all the data collected and analyzed in this research relates. It provides the historical background of Thika as an industrial town and how this has shaped informal activities such as Street vending. The chapter also looks at the urbanization process and how it has affected infrastructural development in Thika town. The chapter ends by analyzing the legal framework influencing informal trading activities in Thika town, the surrounding hinterland, and the capital city of Nairobi.

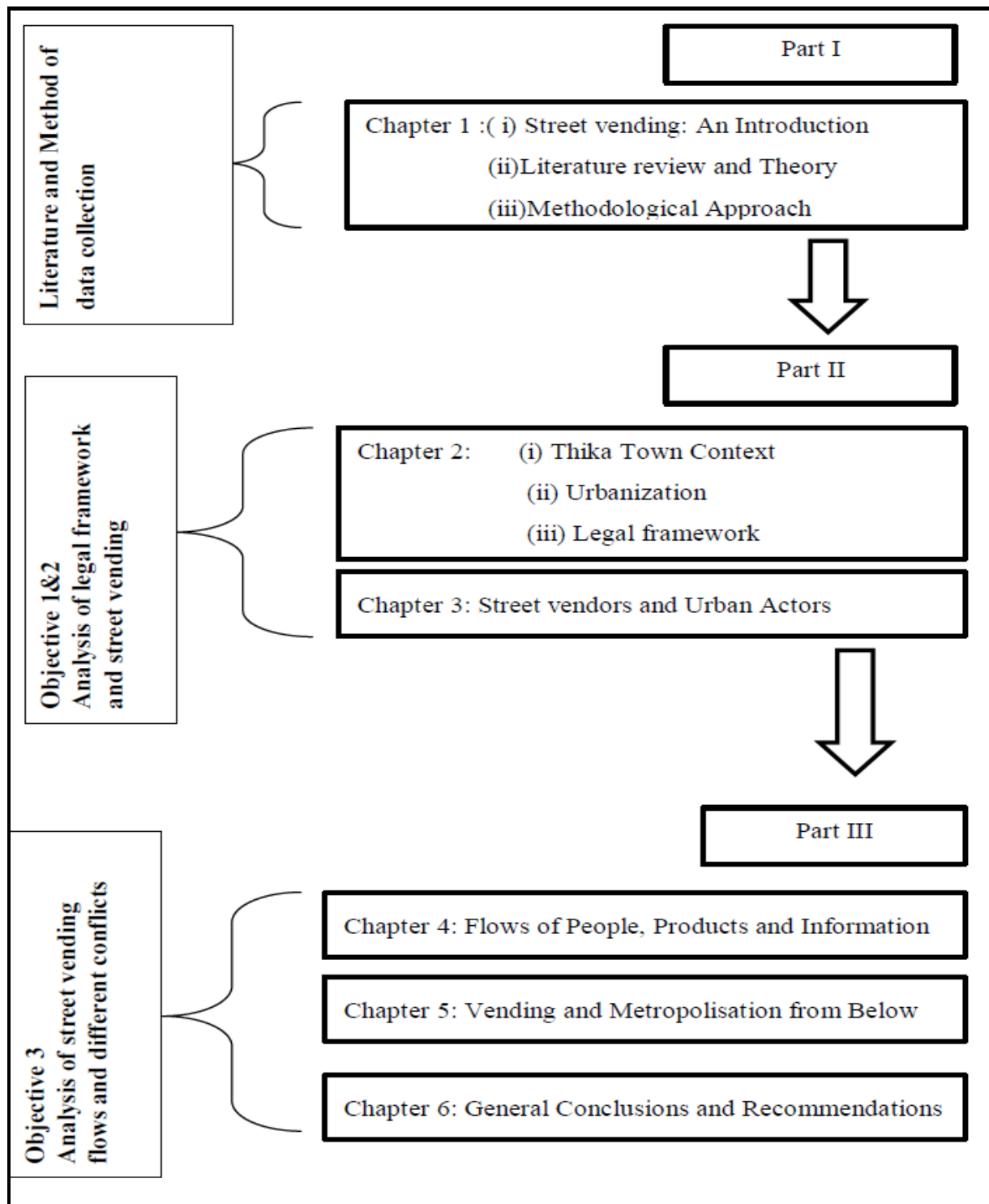
**Chapter 3:** Street Vendors and urban actors. This chapter makes an initial effort to define street vendors and making an effort to classify them into different categories. The chapter demonstrates how despite their limitations, street vendors can make their presence felt at various times on the pavements of Thika town. It then outlines other actors or stakeholders included in Street vending processes. It classifies them as either public or private actors. The chapter presents the findings by examining the initial research objective of identifying various actors and their contribution to Street vending flow.

**Chapter 4:** Flow of People, Products, and information. This chapter presents Thika Town's CBD as an arena where people flow to get products offered by street vendors. It outlines various sources of goods that find their way into the streets of Thika. The sources included selected towns that form the hinterland of Thika together with the capital city Nairobi. The chapter also describes the various formal markets in Thika that form a major source of goods sold in the streets. It also highlights some sources of goods that are outside Kenya.

**Chapter 5:** Governance of urban space, vending flows, and the making of a Metropolis from below. The chapter describes how the governance of urban space is done in Thika, especially by the local authority. It also highlights the conflicts and ambiguities between the various actors in the urban space of Thika. The chapter ends by discussing how regulations, multiple actors, and vendors flow, leading to the Metropolisation of Thika from below.

**Chapter 6:** Conclusion and recommendation: This chapter sums up the reasons for the invasion of Thika town by street vendors. The reasons are the political environment, tolerance by local authorities in Thika, and the high rate of urbanization. The chapter reviews all the research questions raised in chapter one and the responses to these questions as per the findings. Recommendations are given for the various challenges affecting all the actors, especially the major ones, including the County authority, street vendors, and their associations. The tail end of the chapter gives suggestions on further areas for research.

Figure 3 *Structure of Thesis*



(Source: Author 2020)

## **1.9 Summary of the chapter**

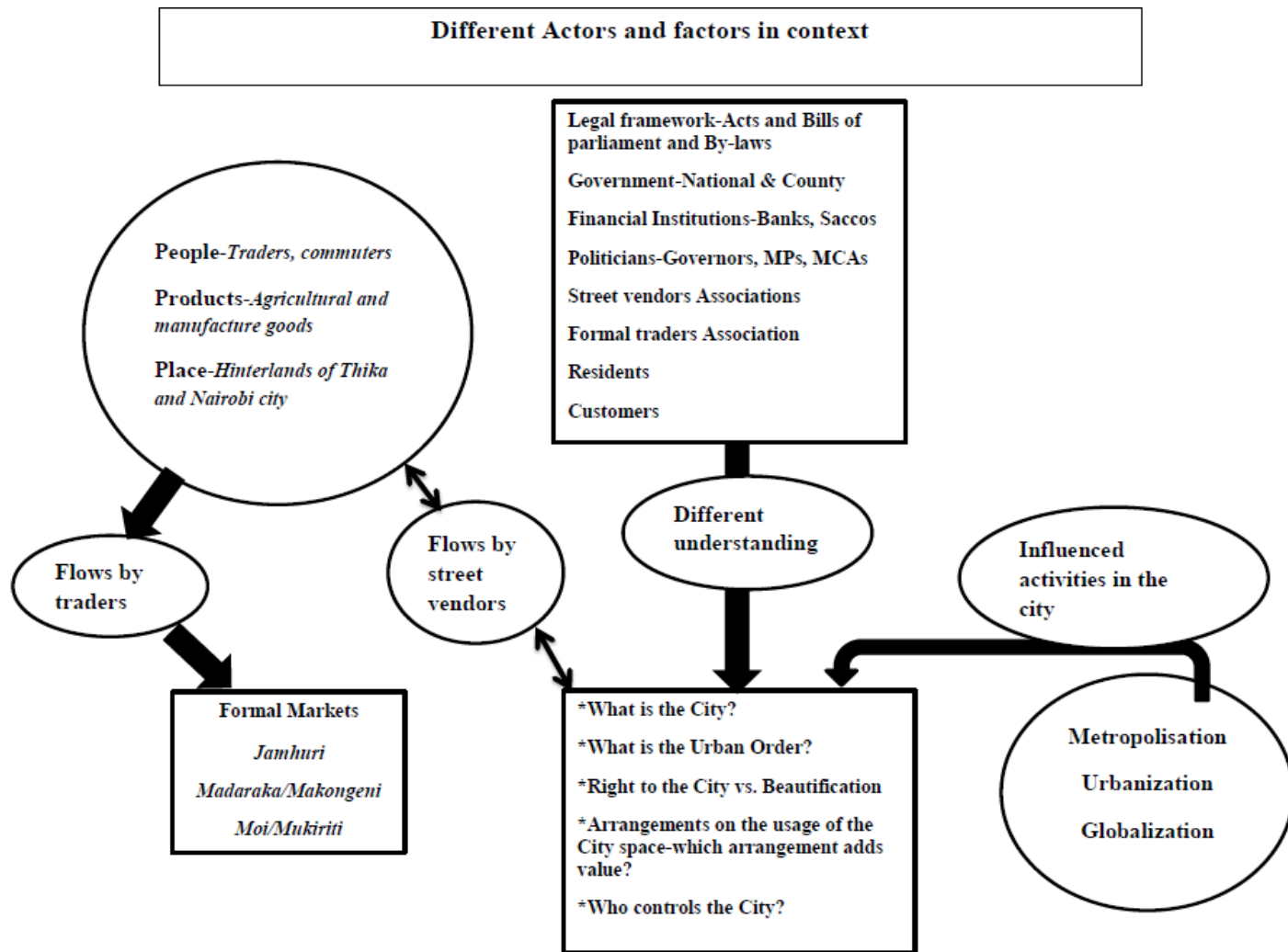
This chapter mainly dealt with the introduction of the subject matter on the topic of this Thesis, which is Metropolisation from below by street vendors. It also highlighted the background of the study, which mainly focused on how street vendors have been able to connect rural areas, cities, and secondary towns. The chapter highlighted some of the research questions and objectives that guided this research, which mainly looks at how Metropolisation from below is made possible by street vendors, the regulations that influence the street vendors, and the actors involved in the whole process.

The chapter also highlighted some spatial interaction theories that influence the mobility of street vendors from one place to the other. The spatial theory explains the aspect of complementarity, where for people to integrate or move from one place to another, there must be demand or supply of the commodities. The second aspect of this theory talks about intervening opportunity, which means how people integrate may change due to a new chance in a new area. People may seize from moving in a given direction if a unique opportunity arises due to its location or the time it is being offered. The third aspect was that of transferability. For transferability to be possible, transport infrastructures (modes and terminals) must be present to support an interaction between two places for them to integrate. In addition, these infrastructures must have a capacity and availability compatible with the requirements of such an interaction. The last theory was Reilly's law, which argues that traders have several alternative destinations; hawkers may visit different destinations to maximize their utility rather than restricting their patronage to one goal. Every destination within the geographic area with which the trader is familiar has some chance of being patronized from the source using the chosen route

The chapter also sought to explain the concept of Metropolisation, which to a bigger extent, is intertwined with other terms such as globalization and urbanization. It explains the aspect of globalization from above and below, together with how different researchers have viewed Metropolisation from above in Angola. The section also defines secondary towns and their role in Metropolisation or integration with rural and cities. The chapter also elaborates on what other authors have written on street vending in Kenya, especially in Thika and Nairobi, plus Nakuru, a

secondary town in Kenya. The chapter concludes with the methodology that has been used in this research, which to a bigger extent, is qualitative through quantitative analysis and has been integrated with some areas. The primary data was collected through interviews, observation, and focus groups. The actor and factors that are considered in the thesis can be seen in figure 4

Figure 4 Different actors and factors in the context



(Source: Author 2020)

## Chapter 2-Thika Town in context: Urbanization and Informality

### 2.1 Introduction

.....Thika town's business community leader, Alfred Wanyoike, says Thika is a billionaire's economy. "Daily, the cash that is handled in this town is more than Sh1.5 a billion. The property deals that are being struck in this town are in a class of their own. Money is readily available in this town and so are opportunities to spend," he says. Those who have opted to be spendthrifts have their song about Thika and those who have opted to be diligent have their prayer for the town. "You only need to work hard and acquire a property or a business in this town. Cash flow and purchasing power are not big issues. Were it not for the Covid-19 effect on businesses, Thika can easily finance the national economy," he says, adding that the best three performing sectors are real estate, manufacturing, and services. (Nation Media Group Online Edition, 10th November 2021)<sup>3</sup>

(Nation Media Group Online Edition, 10th November 2021)<sup>4</sup>

The above statement by the chairperson of the Thika Business district association outlines the potential of Thika town, especially in terms of trade. It shows the leading sectors in the town and the amount of money circulating in this secondary town. Thika town was long considered the top industrial town in Kenya. The manufacturing and agricultural industries improved the economic status of the population in the town. The increase in these activities led to increased urbanization in the town before most of these industries collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today the provision of employment opportunities remains a challenge; as per the Economic survey of 2019, the unemployment rate in Kenya stood at 9.31%, and the majorities are the youth, with many households resulting in dependence on informal livelihoods to generate income.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/kiambu/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-thika-3613976>. Acknowledgement to the journalist in Daily Nation, for the story on "The good, the bad, and the ugly of Thika", part of which is quoted here.

<sup>4</sup> <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/kiambu/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-thika-3613976>. Acknowledgement to the journalist in Daily Nation, for the story on "The good, the bad, and the ugly of Thika", part of which is quoted here.

Despite street vending providing an alternative for job creation and helping distribute goods for formal organizations, the hawkers are still treated like trespassers in the urban spaces of most metropolitan areas (Kamete, 2010). The resistance to street vendors in appropriating spaces by the local authorities has not deterred them from accessing the pavements in the CBD because the demand and convenience of their products are still high. The street vendors have resisted and kept on coming to the urban spaces despite the challenges affecting social, cultural, and environmental change (Babere, 2017)

This chapter examines street vending in detail through a historical analysis of how hawkers came to Thika and their current status. The chapter begins by giving the background of Thika and how it has developed over time, providing a basis for the growth of informal activities such as street vending. The chapter analyses the trends of street vending after independence and more so after the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program, which acted as a catalyst for informal activities following the collapse of industries in Thika and the entire country. The chapter also analyses the various legal and regulatory frameworks under which street vending operates.

## **2.2 Thika Town in Kenya context**

Thika is a town in Kiambu County, per the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. It is located 40km northwest of the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, as shown on Map 1. Thika Superhighway and the railway connection make mobility easier between the two towns. Thika<sup>5</sup> is at the confluence of the River Thika and Chania Rivers, its main water sources. Thika is the sixth biggest town in Kenya after Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Kisumu. The concluded census report of 2019 shows an increase in the population of Thika from 136,576 in the 2009 census to 279,429 in 2019 (KNBS 2019). Therefore, the population of Thika has technically increased by 104.59%.

Thika grew up as an industrial and agricultural zone and, in terms of size, covers an area of about 217.6Km<sup>2</sup>. The concentration of industries in the 1970-the 1990s made Thika town be compared with Birmingham City in the United Kingdom. Before the emergence of Athi River town, Thika's position in industrial development was undisputed. Thika has all spheres of industrial

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<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia 2020

development spanning dozens of decades. When planning the town's future development plan, the administrators in Thika drew parallels with Birmingham Town due to the endless similarities, thus earning the nickname “Birmingham of Kenya.”



Map 1 *Thika Town in the national context*



(Source: Author, Kenya GIS Data 2022)

The town<sup>6</sup> borders Muranga County to the North, Juja Sub-County to the South, Gatundu North and South Sub-Counties to the West, and Machakos County to the East, as shown on Map 2

Map 2: *Thika Town in the regional context*



(Source: Author 2020)

## 2.3 Historical Background of Thika town

The history of Thika dates can be traced back to 1800, when it was just plains, bush, and forest, which were occupied by three communities of Kikuyu, Maasai, and Kamba people, before the settlers relocated to the area, almost at the turn of the 20th Century (Kang'ethe 2012). Two

<sup>6</sup> Thika municipality spatial plan 2018

theories try to explain the origin of the name Thika. The first theory suggests that the name Thika comes from the Kikuyu word “Guthika”, meaning “to bury”. During a great drought, the Maasai people ventured outside of their normal territories looking for water for their huge herds of cattle. Two rivers pass through the town, the Thika and the Chania, providing sustenance for the agricultural activities practiced by the Kikuyus who had settled in the area. Both the Kikuyu and the Maasai communities were desperate for survival and therefore fought a bloody battle that left few survivors. A mound near Blue Posts Hotel supposedly marks where the slain warriors were buried. Thika was also used as a memorial burial site for soldiers who fought in World War II. This is evidenced by a commonwealth cemetery for war veterans found between Thika Training Technical Institute and Mount Kenya University (Wikipedia 2020)

The second theory claims that the name was derived from the Maasai word “Sika”, which means, “rubbing something off an edge.” Therefore the town came to be known as Thika. This is explained during the end of the 1800s, when there was a lot of rinderpest, which affected the people, resulting in the deaths of people and livestock, greatly decimating the population. (Kang’ethe 2012).

Towards the end of the 19th century, outsiders began to settle in this outpost as a convenient resting spot between Nairobi and the upcountry highlands for British settlers. Europeans and Asians began to settle in Thika, the former setting up farms, and the latter setting up shops. By 1913, Thika was already a favorite camp for big-game hunters. The railway line from Nairobi to Thika was constructed in 1913, resolving transport issues in and out of Thika. Sat Punja was among the first Indians to settle in Thika. An Ismaili by the name of Jamal Hirji Ojami then opened the first store in 1914. Kanji Mepa & Co. also started a store in Saba Saba, and soon after, in 1919, three brothers and a cousin – Shree Vershi Mepa, Mulji Mepa, Devshi Mepa, and Devshi Hadha– started Shah Vershi Devshi& Co, which specialized in retail products and farming supplies. They became the major supplier of farming inputs. Gradually, the settlement was transformed from a sparsely populated bush area to a growing industrial town. (Thika municipality spatial plan 2018). The town was given its status by the government gazette in 1924.

In 1924, the name Thika was made official and the place was finally chronicled. Thereafter it

was elevated to a municipality when Kenya gained independence in 1963, and the first Mayor was enthroned in 1968 (ISUDP 2015). Thika would expand to become a prominent metropolis, the setting of major industries, including Kenya Cannery, which later became Del Monte. In those early years, everything was Asian-owned, apart from Edmunds Butchery, which was the only European-owned retail store in Thika. The industrial town of Thika was nicknamed, “the Birmingham of Kenya” as it expanded to become one of the most industrialized towns in Kenya after Nairobi and Mombasa, especially in the 1980s and 1990s as explained by Kang’ethe (2012)

## **2.4 Thika within the Nairobi Metropolitan region**

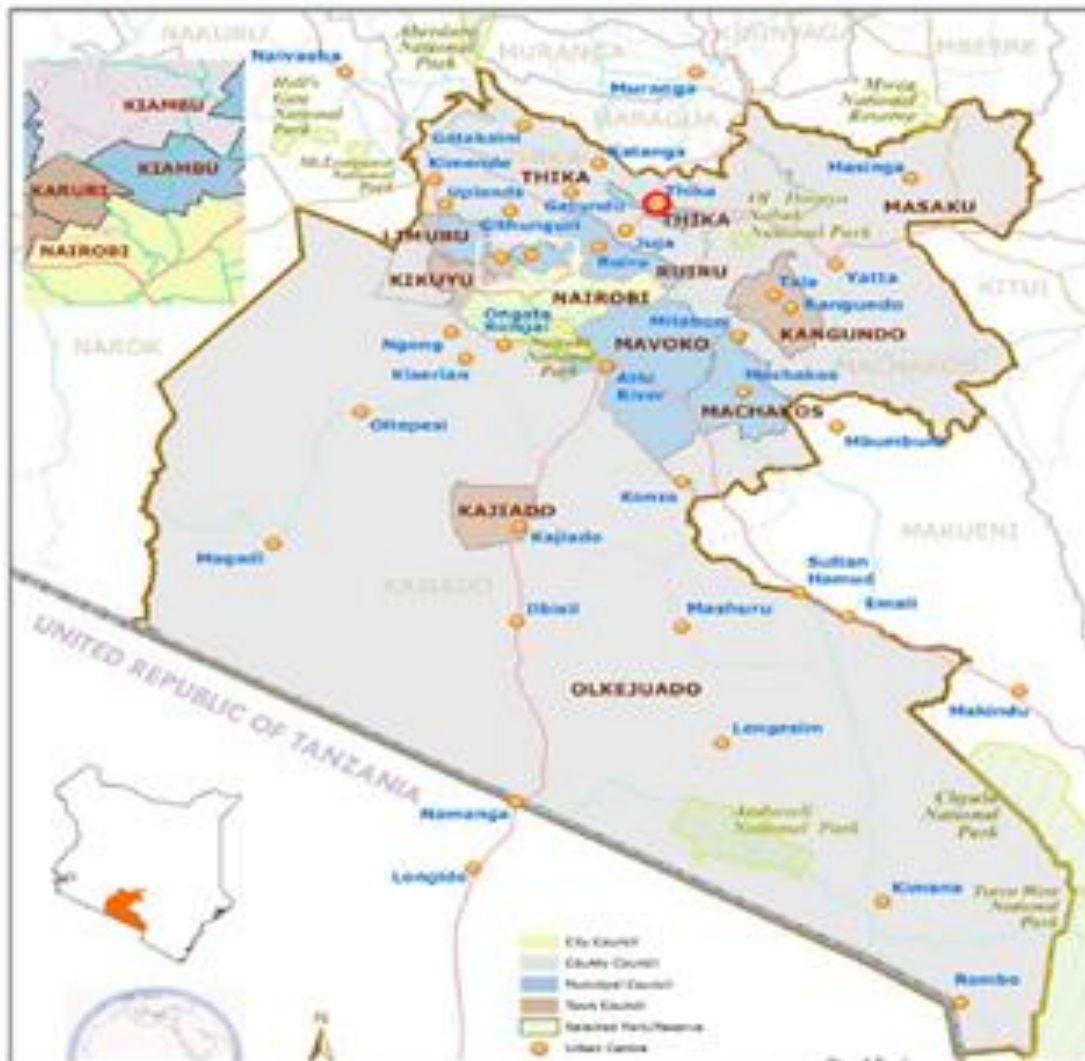
Thika town is an important urban center within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region (as shown on map 3). The town is proposed as a Sub-Regional Centre under the proposed settlement hierarchy within the NMR for 2030 according to the Development of a Spatial Planning Concept for the Nairobi Metropolitan Region Final Plan of 2012 (ISUDP 2015). Thika was proposed because of the following characteristics;

- (1) Its Administrative functions / Sub-County headquarters,
- (2) Due to its higher level of infrastructure,
- (3) Due to its Secondary and tertiary activities, and lastly
- (4) Its Strong industrial base.

The same report suggested constructing an airport to boost movement in and out of Thika (ISUDP, 2015). The railway connection from Nairobi to Nanyuki through Thika town is now an increasingly functional movement of goods and people.

Thika also functions as a gate to Nairobi metropolitan area to most parts of Central Kenya, Rift valley, and Eastern and North Eastern Kenya. For example, when coming from **Central Kenya** towns, especially Nyeri, Nyandarua, Kirinyaga, Murang’a, Gatundu, and Gatanga, one must pass by Thika along the Thika Superhighway. When traveling from parts of **Rift valley** like Nanyuki, one can link up to Thika Via Nyeri or a railway connection between Thika and Nanyuki; **Eastern province**-Meru, Machakos, Embu **North Eastern Kenya**-Garissa, and Isiolo.

Map 3 *Thika within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region*



(Source: Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan 2015).

Thika is also located on the LAPSSET corridor (Map 4) from Nairobi to Isiolo. Once complete, it will open Thika further as a node of Connection as far as Lamu and all the other countries in the corridor. Thika is in the category of the most industrialized town in Kenya. In the late 1970s, it was the third most industrialized after Nairobi and Mombasa. It still boasts of having leading industries in Kenya like KVM (Kenya Vehicles Manufacturers), Bidco oil refineries (one of the leading cooking oil industries in East Africa), and coffee Fruits industries like Delmonte, Kakuzi, and Kevian industry. Thika has attracted a big movement to the town, especially consumers of

these products and people employed to work in these industries.

The service industry was boosted by the entry of three private universities in Thika town and the existence of two public universities near the town. The private universities include Mount Kenya University, Greta University, and UMMA University, while public universities include Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University. The presence of Thika Technical Training Institute adds to the number of the many students in Thika town, making it an attractive place and a place of multiple movements. The town is now more of a college town because of the tertiary institutions within its proximity. This student not only provides market to goods and services in the Town but the students themselves are involved in the informal business as a part-time job to sustain their upkeep in the university. Thika is, therefore, like a Dormitory town that hosts people who work in Nairobi but sleep in Thika and many students in Tertiary institutions who come from other Towns.

The World Bank report on ease of business in Kenyan towns ranked Thika and Eldoret the first for 2016 (Standard Newspaper 20/9/18). According to the report, one needed two days to get a permit to start a formal Business in these two towns. The assumption is that if formal enterprises only require two days to be registered, informal trade will even be much faster to start and operate in Thika town.

## **2.5 Physical Features, climate, and socioeconomic features**

### **2.5.1 Physical Features**

Thika town is one of the 12 sub-counties in Kiambu County, others include; Limuru, Kikuyu, Kabete, Lari, Gatundu South, Gatundu North, Githunguri, Kiambu, Kiambaa, Ruiru, and Juja. Kiambu County is divided into four broad topographical zones i.e., the Upper highland, Lower Highland, Upper Midland, and Lower Midland Zones. The lower midland zone partly covers Thika Town the area lies between 1,200-1,360 meters above sea level. Other physical features that characterize the town include steep slopes and valleys, which are unsuitable for cultivation (Kang'ethe 2012).

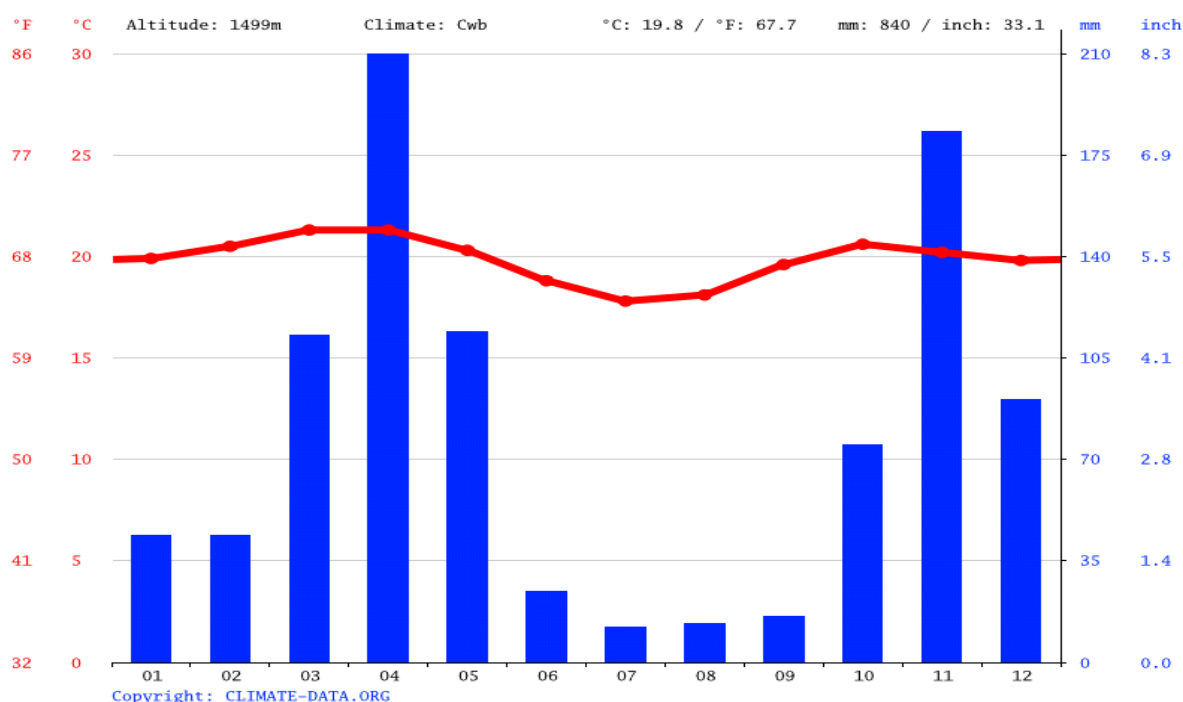
Thika Town is covered by shallow soils, which are poorly drained, and these areas are characterized by low rainfall, which severely limits agricultural development. However, these

areas are suitable for ranching and the growth of drought-resistant crops (KCDP, 2013). The town gets its water supply from the Chania River and its tributaries comprising Thika and Karininu Rivers that rise from the slopes of Mt. Kinangop in the Aberdares range.

### 2.5.2 Climate

The climate is moderate tropical with sunshine most of the year-round and typical average temperatures of 25°C during the day, as shown in figure 5. The hottest period in January to March leads to long rains, and the coldest is between June and August. The average annual rainfall in Thika and its environs ranges between 900 mm and 1,250 mm per annum<sup>7</sup>. Kiambu County's relative humidity ranges from 54% in dry months to 300% in wet months of March up to August (GoK, 2015).

Figure 5 Rainfall and Temperature Patterns in Thika



(Source: climate-data<sup>8</sup>.org)

<sup>7</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thika#Geography>

<sup>8</sup> CLIMATE-DATA .ORG retrieved on 30th April 2020

### 2.4.3 Administration

Thika town falls under the Thika West Sub-county. Thika West sub-county has two divisions, 5 locations, and 12 sub-locations. Thika Town is in Thika Town Constituency, with 5 County Assembly Wards. Township, which consists of Kariminu, Biashara, and Kianjau Sub-Locations, covers Thika's CBD and is an area of interest in this research

Table 1 *County assembly wards in Thika Town*

	County Assembly Ward	Area(Km <sup>2</sup> )	Description
1	Township	38.3	Kariminu, Biashara, and Kianjau Sub-Locations
2	Kamenu	40	Komu and Kamenu Sub-Location
3	Hospital	12.8	Majengo and Umoja Sub-Location
4	Gatuanyaga	82.1	Munyu, Gatuanyaga and Githima
5	Ngoliba	44.4	Ngoliba and Maguguni Sub-Location
	TOTAL	217.6	

(Source: Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan 2015)<sup>9</sup>.

### 2.5.4 Demography

Thika is the sixth largest town in Kenya, with a population of 279,429 (KNBS 2019), up from 136,576 in 2009. The town has an annual population growth of 7.998% (which is almost 8%) compared to Kenya's 2.3% within the same period, as shown in Table 2

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<sup>9</sup> Source: <http://www.infotrackea.co.ke/services/leadership/constituencyinfo.php?cinf=wards&t=114>



*Table 2 Population Growth of Thika Town and Kenya*

Year	Thika Town		Kenya	
	Total population	Annual growth Rate (%)	Total population	Annual growth Rate (%)
1962	-	-	8,636,300	
1969	18,387	-	10,942,705	2.4
1979	41,324	8.44	15,327,061	3.43
1989	57,603	3.38	21,448,774	3.42
1999	82,665	3.68	28,686,607	2.96
2009	136,576	5.15	38,610,097	3.02
2019	<b>279,429</b>	<b>7.998*</b>	<b>47,564,296</b>	<b>2.3</b>

\*estimation by the researcher

(Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics)

### **2.5.5 Economic activities**

The main economic activities in Thika town include agricultural processing, particularly in horticulture and pineapple, coffee, cooking oils, and animal feed processing. Other industries include textile, macadamia nuts, wheat, tannery, motor vehicle assemblies, cigarette manufacturing, bakeries, packaging, and industrial chemicals. Many small-scale industries and several major factories exist in and around the town. The service sector is well represented by the establishment and growth of several educational and financial institutions.

Regarding the service industry, Thika is home to Mt. Kenya University, Greta University, and UMMA University. It has several middle-level colleges, such as Thika Technical Training Institute (TTTI), Jodan Institute of Technology, and Amboseli Institute of Hospitality. The town has hundreds of secondary and primary schools, plus dozens of financial institutions. The growth of the Nairobi metropolitan region, improved infrastructure, and services have led to new residential estates (Wikipedia 2020).

### 2.5.6 Land use in Thika town

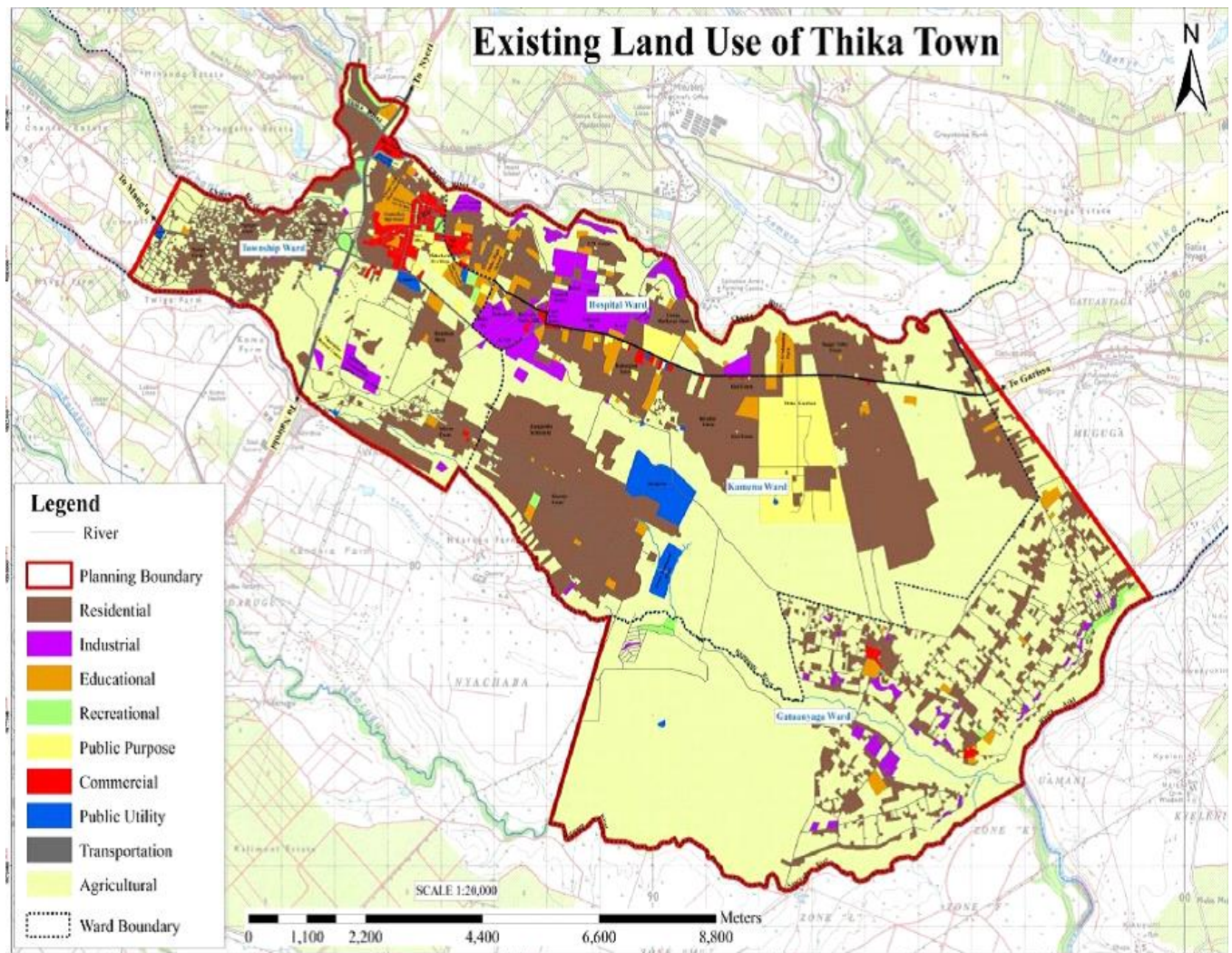
Like any other Kenyan town, Thika has various land uses. Some of the areas are developed, while others remain undeveloped. According to the Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan for Thika town (ISUDP) 2015), Measurements from an aerial survey provided the following data concerning land use within Thika town. It shows a built-up area of 4,069 Ha (40.69 square kilometers). It shows that within the planning area of 105.43 square kilometers, much land is available for development, mainly for agricultural use.

Table 3 *Land-use in Thika Town*

	<b>Developed Area</b>	<b>% Area</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Residential	54.0	All residential areas, including informal settlements
2	Industrial	11.2	All production and processing plants
3	Education	8.6	Universities, middle-level colleges, secondary and primary schools
4	Recreation	1.8	All the open spaces, such as Thika Stadium, Mama Ngina garden, and Christina Wangari garden, among other open spaces like the railway line and power line riparian reserves
5	Public Purpose	3.0	It includes hospitals, cemeteries, fire-station, government institutions and offices, police stations, social halls, etc.
6	Commercial	2.8	All business premises
7	Public Utilities	3.25	All public facilities provided by the Government
8	Transportation	6.35	All roads and railway line
9	Agriculture	9.0	All potential catchment areas of the town
	Total	100.0	

(Source: Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan 2015).

*Map 4 Existing Land-use in Thika Town*



(Source: Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan 2015)

## 2.6 Urbanization

Many scholars define urbanization using different criteria due subject matter being addressed. Some mainly look at it as the growth of a small rural area into a large urban center. Owuor (2006) defines it as a process of town formation and development, while Obutho (2000) defines it as a process of acquiring non-rural behavior. It is also associated with engaging in non-agricultural activities in urban areas. Urbanization is associated with the economic development of any region that involves secondary and tertiary economic activities, which have high returns. Most developed countries are highly urbanized, meaning that urbanization can be a positive

indicator of growth and development. The factors which seem to entice people to move to urban areas include a promise of good jobs and better services, such as good infrastructure that is more developed than in rural areas (Barbere 2013)

The urbanization process involves the movement of the population to the urban areas from the rural areas, especially in the search for job opportunities. According to Ritchie (2018), by 2017, 4.1 billion people were living in urban areas meaning that over half of the world (55%) lives in urban settings. According to the UN, in 2007, the urban population surpassed the population living in rural areas. It is expected that this percentage will move to about 68% by the year 2050 (more than two-thirds of the world) will be living in urban areas, up from 54% in 2016<sup>10</sup>.

Africa is the least urbanized continent in the world compared to other continents, with statistics showing that in the 70s, only 25% were urbanized. By 2050 the urban population in Africa is estimated to get to 950million (OECD 2020). Unlike urbanization in more developed countries in the western world, in Africa, the process has produced cities that cannot absorb the surging populations due to a lack of proper infrastructure (Simone,2002).

In Kenya, the rate of urbanization has always been on the rise but below the average of the African continent. In 1962 just before the independence, it was 7.8%, and by the turn of the millennium, the rate was 20% while recently, in 2019, it stood at 31.18% as per the total population of an urban population of 14,831,700 (KNBS 2019). By “By 2030<sup>11</sup>, at least eight million Kenyans will be living in urban centers, and by 2050, the population will have risen by an extra 12 million

Urbanization takes many forms, as elaborated by Kang’ethe (2016), who notes that it can take various manifestations, such as an increase in urban population and the subsequent reduction of the rural population, urban sprawl into the rural agricultural hinterlands, and change in the spatial organization of land uses, which consequently lead to the outbreak of informality. The increase

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<sup>10</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/western/article/2001424747/bungoma-now-gets-sh1-billion-boost-for-city-status-bid>

in urbanization, especially in Africa, has not matched that of economic growth, with the former growing in multiples compared to the latter. It has increased the unemployment rate in urban areas as formal jobs cannot absorb the ever-increasing numbers. Nielsen (2012) notes an increase in the informal, unregulated labour market while the formal sector experienced a decline due to factors such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which entailed Retrenchment and privatization.

### **2.6.1 Urbanization in Thika**

The Closeness of Thika to Nairobi Metropolitan highlights the reality that the town<sup>12</sup> is a dormitory for much of the labour force in the city. It explains urbanization challenges as a secondary town near Nairobi's capital. The high growing population rates in the town (279,429 in 2019, up from 136,576 in 2009) is a testimony of the influence of Nairobi on the urbanization rate in Thika, and the population is further projected to grow in the coming years (Kang'ethe 2016). This rapid rate of urbanization in Thika town is creating new demands for jobs and services that the formal public sector may not be able to meet (Handerson, 2002; Lupala, 2002; Beall and Fox, 2009). This extraordinary increase in the population of Thika can further worsen the issues of unemployment and underemployment, as noted by Lloyd-Jones and Carmona (2002)

The most important aspect of street vending in Thika is its uniqueness regarding vendor movement. The movement is between the Nairobi-Thika-hinterland of Thika. The uniqueness is that in most circumstances, vendors tend to move from a secondary town to a capital city rather than the other way around, as in Thika and Nairobi Metropolis. Thika is experiencing lots of urbanization as it had several years ago when it was among the leading industrialized town in Kenya. The SAPs halted industrial expansion in the late 1980s, and early 1990s as most of them were forced to shut down, and some retrenched their workers because of operating below the normal scale.

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<sup>12</sup> The terms “city”, “town” and “urban centre” will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

Thika<sup>13</sup> is ranked as the sixth major town in Kenya after Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Eldoret. Currently, the major urban investment in Thika is in tertiary institutions and the commercial sector and retains its industrial function. Being home to Universities (both private and public), it has attracted numerous populations within its vicinity as they access these services.

The service industry in Thika has been on an upward trend, especially in institutions of higher learning. It has been boosted by the entry of three private universities in Thika town and the existence of two public universities near the town. The private universities include Mount Kenya University (with approximately 52,000 students), Greta University (750 students), and UMMA University (400 Students). At the same time, nearby public universities, like Kenyatta University (70,000 students) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (30,000 students), are about 26km and 15km, respectively. Middle-level colleges like Thika Technical Training Institute (1,768) and Jordan institute of technology (3,000) add to the number of students in Thika town, making it an attractive place and a place of multiple movements. The student not only provides a market for goods and services in the Town but, as mentioned in earlier chapters, is also involved in the informal business as a part-time job to sustain their upkeep at the university.

According to Kinyanjui (1987), the industrial development of Thika began in the colonial period between 1920-1940, during which three major manufacturing industries were established The East African Tanning Extract, the Kenya Tanning Extract, and the Bulleys Tanneries. European countries owned most of these companies. Bulleys Tanneries specializes in the processing and preservation of hides and skins, while Thika Tanning Extract specializes in wattle bark processing. More industries were established post-independence, and by 1978 as mentioned in the earlier chapters, Thika became the third most industrialized town after Nairobi and Mombasa. This factor was the major attraction of population influx in Thika that brought early

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<sup>13</sup> <https://top-10-largest-cities-in-kenya.html>

urbanization to this secondary town<sup>14</sup>

The other factor that attracted people to Thika was its agricultural activities. According to ISUDP (2015), 30% of the Thika Town Planning area is under agriculture and horticulture activities, with the main cash crop being pineapples and coffee. Other food crops like maize and beans are grown on a small scale. Therefore Thika town has become an agro-processing hub within the county and the region, especially on pineapples. More migrants continued to be attracted more migrants into the town as they worked in these farms or the Agro-processing hubs. Calas (2007), in his paper, *“Metropolitan dynamics of East Africa,”* notes that one of the driving forces behind this urbanization of people and spaces lies in the opening up of East Africa to the world. Opening the region integrates the economy globally because of the competition between cities and territories. Thika nowadays trades with east African countries like Tanzania (Onions) and Ethiopia (beans) and even sells some of its products to Somalia. This transaction brings more people to this secondary town, increasing populations and accelerating urbanization trends.

When population trends are checked over time (shown in Table2), one realizes that the population of Thika town has been on an upward trend since 1969, when the first census was undertaken. By then, the population of Thika was a mere 18,387, but from the census of 2019, the population stands at 279,429. Compared to the population of 2009, 136,576 persons, the population of Thika town doubled in a decade between the years 2009 to 2019. There is a huge increase in population in 10 years, considering that Kenya’s population only grew by approximately 22% in the same period. Bordering Thika town is other sub-counties, densely populated, such as Ruiru with a population of 371,111, Juja with 300,948, and combined Gatundu north and south 231,973. Most of these towns surround Thika, the major commercial town within Kiambu County. According to the 2019 Census, Kiambu County's urban population is 1,706,285 compared to a total population of 2,417,735. Therefore, Thika, the biggest commercial town in the county, is assumed to take the lion’s share in urbanization.

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<sup>14</sup> The terms “Secondary town” and “intermediate town” will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

### **2.6.2 Industrial Development in the 70s and 80s**

The industrial development in Thika started as early as the 1920s with the establishment of manufacturing and service industries (Kanorio 2019). After the establishment of Kenya Tanning Extract Ltd, Bulleys Tanneries in 1943, and Kenya Cannery in 1948 as shown in table 4, Thika was awakening to the move of industrialization targeted at an export market (Swainson, 1980; Louise and Robert, 2006; Kanorio 2019)

After Kenya got independence in 1963, the first decade experienced the growth of industries in the country as noted by Garrido, Owino, and Njuguna (2010) marking Kenya's period of economic growth and performance. Kinyanjui (2007) notes that artisans, small traders, and industrialists were provided with funding that could enable them to expand and construct light industries. Kang'ethe (2012) adds that the new Government established Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE) Limited in 1967 as a subsidiary of the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) with a major role of promoting indigenous entrepreneurship by financing and developing SMEs, especially all those who were starting them. Some of the major functions of this institution were to facilitate the development and incubation of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) countrywide and to provide credit and business development services (BDS) sustainably. Kinyanjui (2007) notes that by 1976, the Africans acquired most of the commercial enterprises in Thika town as part of the Africanisation process; examples include Munene industries, Waka industries, Thika General Workshop, and Polysack. Thika had several industries even before independence as shown in Table 4. A few Asians were also involved in this form of business as they were among the first group of a non-indigenous groups to settle in Thika town.



*Table 4 Industries in Thika before independence*

Industry	Year of establishment	Products
Kenya Tanning Extract LTD	1934	Wattle extract, solid chopped powder and solid pressed back
Bulleys Tanneries LTD.	1943	Hides, skins and finished leather
Dragon (1970) Limited	1948	Semi-finished and fully tanned leather
Metal Box Company	1948	Metal containers
Kenya Cannery	1948	Fruit processing and packaging
Virani confectionery works	1949	Sweets and toffee
Maxim printing works	1952	Commercial stationery
Kenya paper mills LTD	1957	Paper
Thika cloth mills	1959	Shirts, bed sheets, mattress, cloth and calico

(Source: Kanorio 2019)

Thika town, which has more than 58 industries to date according to the County Integrated Development Plan (2018-2022), experienced an influx of these industries between the 1970s and 1980s. Most of these industries were in the textile, automobile, and chemical industries. These industries included Kenya Vehicle Manufacturers (KVM), a British American Tobacco (BAT) Limited processing plant, Kensara, Bhupco Limited, Kenblest, Bulleys Tanneries, and Kenya Textile Mills (KTM). According to Kinyanjui (2007), these industries provided jobs for many people in Thika town and people migrating from its hinterland.

The development of these industries brought about backward and forwarded linkages in the town and the hinterland. Industrialization improved the livelihood of people in the area, attracting migrants from the hinterland who went to work in Thika (HSRC 2004). The report further notes that Thika has traditionally been rich in agricultural production, having many large-scale coffee estates because of its historic industrial and agricultural strength.

The industrial fortunes of Thika changed between the 80s & 90s due to the liberalization of Markets, which allowed the importation of second-hand clothes and leather products famously

known as “Mitumba<sup>15</sup>.” The textile industries in Kenya could not compete with the cheap imports from outside the country (CBS 1995). According to Nyang’or (1994), Mitumba preferred locally manufactured goods because of being affordable and perceived as better quality than local products. These new developments spelled doom to KTM and Bulleys Tanneries (both based in Thika), which were forced to retrench their workers to stay afloat but eventually closed down their operations (Kinyanjui 2007). In 1995, Kenya Textile Mills was liquidated and placed under receivership.

In their 2004 report on “The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Land Rights in Thika District,” the Human sciences research Council (HSRC) noted that a combination of factory closures and the poor conditions prevailing in the coffee market boosted the level of unemployment and under-employment, especially for the casual laborers that formerly provided a large source of supplementary income to rural households. Cases of violence and robbery were reportedly on the rise in the district due to the local economy’s deterioration. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey of 1997, Thika District experienced a greater increase in poverty three years earlier than any other district in Central Province.

Mary Kinyanjui (2010) notes that the collapse of the coffee industry left many men jobless, while migrating to Thika was no longer an option because of the collapse of import-substituting industries. The leaving of urban areas to rural areas was very common, especially around the hinterlands of Thika.

### **2.6.3 Development of informal activities in Thika Town after independence**

Even before the independence of Kenya in 1963, Thika experienced an influx of population due to the development of industries from as early as the 1920s (Kanorio 2019). According to Stamp (1980), the population of Thika had increased from 5,000 to 12,000 in the 1950s following the establishment of various industries. According to Andreasen (1989), the population of Thika Municipality in 1948 was 4,435 and increased to 13,952 in 1962, just before the independence. After the independence in the 1960s, thousands of workers continued to flood due to the

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<sup>15</sup> Second hand items (i.e. clothes)

“Kenyanisation” program, which saw more industries formerly under foreign ownership revert to Kenyans. In 1964 when Thika gained municipality status and the parliamentary constituency of President Kenyatta, more people moved in because of expected favors.

Thika’s population increased by almost five times more than the number of jobs in the manufacturing industries between 1969 and 1979, according to Kanorio (2019), which made the Rural-urban linkage a feature of labour relations. The increasing population was mainly from the hinterlands of Murang’a, Nyeri, Embu, Meru, and Ukambani, which acted as cheap labour for the industries and plantations in Thika. Others were commuting from Gatanga, Gatundu, and Kamwangi divisions, according to Kinyanjui (1987). For the labourers who were not lucky to get employment in these industries or plantations, informal trading was the best option.

#### **2.6.4 Structural Adjustment Programmes and informal trading in Thika**

The structural adjustment program adopted by the Kenyan government during the fiscal year of 1980/1981 was perhaps one of the major programs that many aspects of Kenyan lives. The program, inspired by the Bretton wood institutions (IMF and World Bank), was meant to restore efficiency in all sectors of the economy and lead to the economy's growth (Theobald and Tolhurst, 2003; Zeleza, 2010; Kihonge, 2014 ). The adjustments policies were supposed to reduce the government involvement in the running of some state-owned parastatals leading to privatization, liberalization, and deregulation of interest and exchange rates.

All these reforms implied that Kenyan industries were left to compete with the outside world without the government’s intervention. According to Kanorio (2019), industries in Thika had not fully developed when the liberalization policies under SAPs were introduced; therefore, stiff competition from multinational companies interfered with their operation. Most of them collapsed or relocated because, under stiff competition, those who wanted to survive retrenched most of their workers. The collapse and relocation of industries and companies raised poverty and unemployment. Some of the retrenched workers ended up in the informal sector. The formal industry was shrinking due to measures instituted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank forcing the government to cut the size of public servants. Like in Kenya, other African countries faced the same challenges to formal sector employment owing to this policy of

privatization of government-owned companies worsening the unemployment problem as noted by Charmes (2000), Cohen (2004), Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah (2008).

### **2.6.5 Infrastructure development**

Infrastructure development is a major factor for urbanization and Metropolisation to take root. Lacoux (2019) notes that a global metropolis is marked by the importance of the means of transport and facilities connecting them globally. Metropolis is at the heart of transport networks and modern communication infrastructures, such as airports, high-speed lines, and port hubs that make them easily accessible. In the context of Thika, which is within the metropolitan area of Nairobi, Thika Superhighway, officially opened in November 2012 by former President Mwai Kibaki, has contributed greatly to transforming it into a vital economic hub for the region and beyond. The transformation of the road into a super highway is one of Kenya's first large-scale transportation infrastructure projects.

The Thika superhighway, part of the classified international trunk road A2 (as shown on the map5), originates in downtown Nairobi to Thika and then extends towards Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale, and into Ethiopia, being part of the multinational Great North Road, making it easier for Kenya to integrate with Ethiopia benefiting Thika largely because it is a big commercial Town after Nairobi City served by the Superhighway (ISUDP2015)<sup>16</sup>. The superhighway is also an important link on the Great North Trans African highway – traverses from South Africa's Cape town to Egypt's capital Cairo-one of the highest priorities in the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) short-term action plan. Thika is, therefore, strategically placed as a Node of connectivity not only within Kiambu County but also in the East African region and Africa as a whole. The superhighway also connects to the main Northern Corridor from Mombasa-Uganda-DRC at the Museum Hill Interchange.

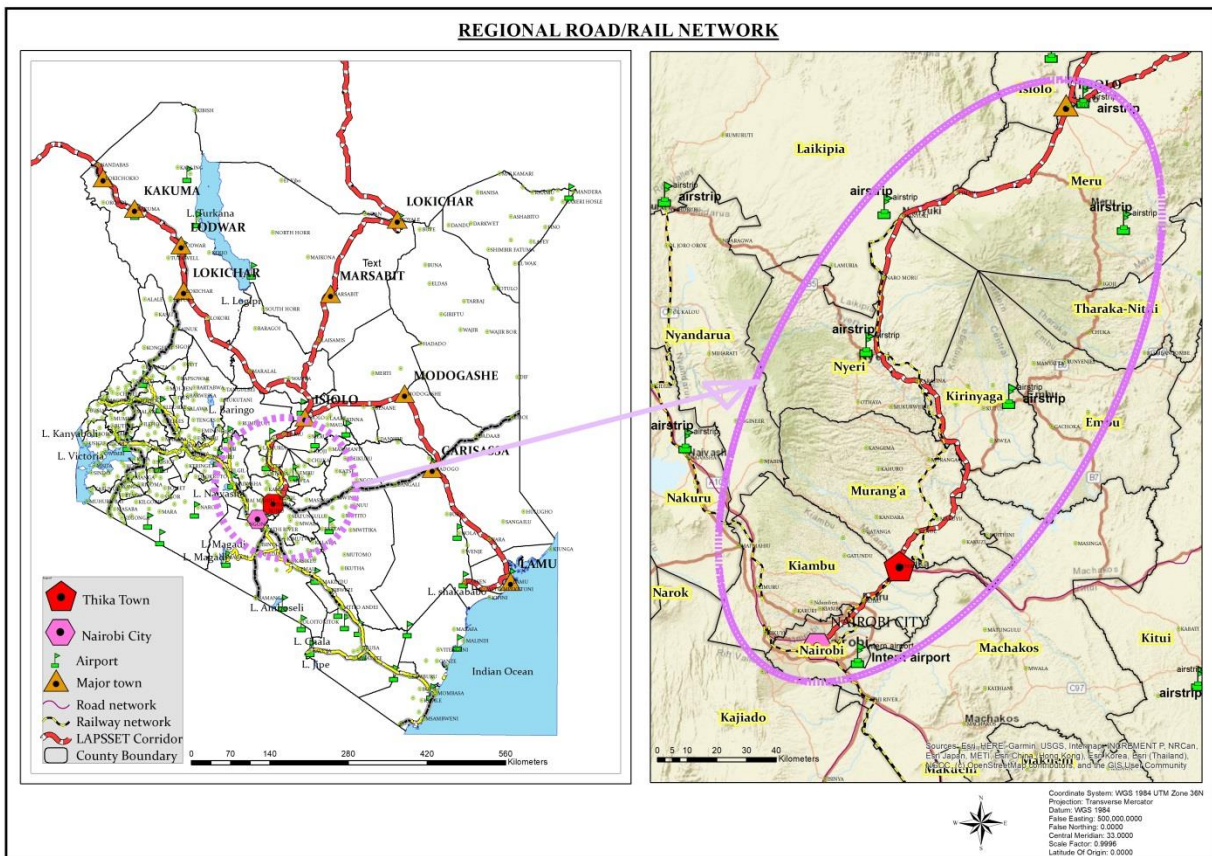
Thika is also located on a LAPSSET corridor (Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport) from Nairobi to Isiolo, as shown on Map 5. It is a positive factor for the future development and urbanization of the Town. When the LAPSSET project is completed, it will comprise roads,

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<sup>16</sup> Digital Topographical Mapping and the Preparation of Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plans for Cluster III Towns

railways, ports, pipelines, and special economic zones. The project starts in Lamu in Kenya through Isiolo Addis Ababa, then to Djibouti. In contrast, the second phase will connect Lamu to Kribi/Doula in Cameroon via Juba in South Sudan and Bangui in the Central African Republic<sup>17</sup>.

*Map 5 Thika's location on Regional and Road/Rail Network*



(Source: Author 2022)

The town has a railway station, which has been unused for over ten years, but this changed in Mid-June 2020 when Kenya Railways Corporation (KRC) started rehabilitating the 178km Thika-Nanyuki Meter gauge railway. The railway will spur economic development in Thika town (Kiambu county metropolis) and other parts of the central region like Murang'a, Kirinyaga, Nyeri, and Laikipia counties. Most of these counties are hinterlands of Thika, meaning that the

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/lapsset-project-adopted-by-au-in-move-to-boost-continent-s-free-trade-area-1435134>

urbanization rate is likely to surge further. The railway is now in use and has seen a lot of passenger and cargo traffic between Nairobi and Nanyuki town through Thika town(as shown in photo1).

*Photo 1 A cargo train at Del Monte Kenya Ltd in Thika*



(Source: John Kamau2020)

Alongside the railway and road connectivity, there has been a discussion on constructing the Thika international airport. The consideration was due to the completion of the Thika superhighway, which would complement the airport. However, the construction has not started, but the area along Garissa road near the gatuanyaga shopping center has been identified for the airport project.

All these factors have necessitated a developed infrastructure. A well-laid transport and communication have had instances of unplanned urban spatial expansion. As Musa & Odera (2015) observes, the recent land use changes around the area and its environs through land use conversion from agricultural activities to commercial and residential buildings. The reason



behind the increase in population in Thika town. In their study, Mbugua & Odera (2018) found out that over 34 years since 1976, there has been an immense urban sprawl in the area under agriculture/vegetation 38%, bare land has reduced by 7% while there has been an increase in built-up areas by 31%. Mbugua et al. (2018) indicate the existence of urban sprawl in areas lying 6-10km from Thika's CBD. Thika expansion is described as omnidirectional (scattered and leapfrog) since the urban spread occurs in all directions spreading further from the town Centre, especially on the eastern side because there is more space for expansion (Mbugua & Odera 2018).

#### **2.6.6 Urban sprawl in Thika**

Over time Thika has continued to experience urban sprawl because of the migration of the population into the town. Therefore, there is no doubt that the rate of urban sprawl in Thika is proportional to the rate of population change. Estates such as Kisii, Kiganjo, and Landless have seen an increase in the population in the last decade, meaning that arable land has been converted into residential and commercial use. Some of the lands that were initially under coffee and other food crops have been converted to real estate; an example can be seen in photo 2 of the land near the Njomoko area, which is about 3km from Thika's CBD

*Photo 2 Urban sprawl in Thika*



(Source: Author 2020)

Most of these buildings are Hostels that are coming up because of the increasing student

populations within Thika town due to incoming institutions of higher learning. Thika is turning out to be a college town and therefore has a high demand for housing. In an interview with the chairperson of Thika Town Hawker's Welfare Association (current owners of rental houses in Kiganjo-Thika), he says...

*“Eventually, the group opted to invest in a more viable plot of land whose value could appreciate faster and offer good quick returns, and that is when they bought the plot in Kiganjo in Thika for Ksh. 1 million(7,803.78Euros), all from members' contributions”.*

Most of the land here was under coffee plantations, but urban sprawl has led to some of them being sold off for the construction of rental houses. The Managing director<sup>18</sup> of Silverseed Company, one of the leading land-buying/selling Companies,

*.... most of the residents of Thika had big chunks of the land but have sold them off due to the increasing population. Thika town is now expanding towards the eastern parts, especially the Ukambani areas. The areas formerly under coffee plantations are now being subdivided into smaller portions for settlement because of the ever-increasing population in Thika. The land has been appreciating significantly in the region, and many people are willing to dispose of their huge tracts of land for other uses other than agriculture.*

As Urbanization and urban sprawl continue to grow in Thika, it brings up another challenge of Environmental waste management. Many developments are happening without necessary infrastructures, such as roads, sewers, and drainage systems, negatively impacting residents. According to an officer<sup>19</sup> in the environmental department in Thika Sub-county,

*a lot of solid waste is generated in the town due to the increased population per household. With the increase in Thika's population, the environment department has devised a plan to create a facility for sorting waste. The project known as*

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<sup>18</sup> Interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019

<sup>19</sup> interview carried out on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020



*Landfill is in partnership with the Japanese Government.*

The officer acknowledged that the increase in population in the CBD, especially in the evening, is due to the street vendors who come from other towns and end up dumping some of their waste products in Thika town.

Another land report released by Cytonn Real Estate company on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and published by capital FM business news indicates that the asking price for an acre in Thika is at Sh9.2 million, followed by Syokimau and Mlolongo at Sh12 million. According to the report, Thika offers one of the highest returns in the country. In the information, Thika's price appreciation is boosted by speculative tendencies brought about by the area's growth potential and urbanization pressure due to devolution. The key factor driving land prices in Thika is a positive demographic such as high population growth rates of 7.9<sup>20</sup> percent per annum over the last ten years.

## **2.7 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter focused on the study area of Thika town within Kiambu County as per the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. Being 40km from Nairobi town means many interactions, especially with the road and railway connection. The fact that Thika is within Nairobi metropolitan area makes the integration between these two towns seamless. The chapter also focuses on the historical background and earlier settlements in Thika that connects to the current dynamics making observable changes in its development.

The chapter describes Thika further in terms of physical and climatic features and focuses on the socio-economic aspect of the town. This socio-economic aspect, such as demographic changes in this secondary town, makes it important to study Thika. The economic activities, land use, and industrial development of the town explain the reasons for the mobility to this town. First, having grown as an industrial town gives a background of the early urbanization in the late 1970s and the 1980s. The industrialization in the said period accelerated the town's growth patterns, especially with its proximity to Nairobi. Several car manufacturing, textile, and agricultural-based industries are set up in this town, attracting several service-based sectors.

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<sup>20</sup> Rate of population growth rate of Thika based on the Researcher's calculations

The collapse of the industries in the late 1980s and 1990s seems to have changed the economic patterns of the town, which saw an increase in service industries, especially educational institutions. The change in economic activities has also been attributed to the infrastructural development taking place in the town. The influx of people and goods has increased urbanization as cases of urban sprawl increase with the change of land use patterns, i.e., from agricultural to real estate. The completion of the Thika superhighway and the installation of new universities and colleges seems to have triggered the new urbanization patterns. The new urbanization patterns encompass street vending, especially with the collapse of the industries in Thika. The secondary town experiences many informal trading activities brought by the collapse of the industries and the influx of universities in the town, meaning more markets for goods.



## **Chapter 3- Methodological Approach**

### **3.1 Introduction**

A research methodology is meant to expound, defend, and justify a concept (Mugenda and Mugenda 2012). This section contains the approach taken toward designing this research study. Furthermore, it is a representation of the population under investigation. It also includes the data collection instruments such as content analysis, observation interviews, and Focus group discussions.

The data collection involved both primary and secondary data. This research's conceptualization entailed exploring different theories and concepts from the existing literature. As mentioned earlier, the tools used in collecting data include observation, using several key informants, interviews, document reviews, and mapping. It is worth noting that the researcher had a personal experience as an informal trader during the data collection. It enabled the researcher to understand the adventures of a street vendor on the pavements of Thika town. In-depth interviews and observation were used to get crucial information on the streets. The researcher also used peer-to-peer exchange seminars and several presentations to critique his research, plus the methodology adopted.

#### **3.1.1 Selection of the study area**

The study area selection should apply to other contexts, as Wiesman (2000) argues. In this thesis, Thika town was selected due for various reasons key among them being that it is the biggest commercial center in Kiambu County. Thika is also the leading commercial town in the former Central province due to its proximity to the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi. The town, therefore, constitutes a major center for economic, social, and cultural activities within central Kenya, making it an appropriate set-up for this study.

The other characteristics that influenced its selection include its social and economic changes, the growth of its population size, and increasing dependency on informal livelihood activities, especially after the collapse of most industries. The increase in these informal activities, especially in the last decade, has led to growth in the economic, social, and built-up environment.

Third, the researcher's familiarity with the study area made it ideal. The researcher's access to Thika town frequently makes it easy to get data through an already established network. Lastly, most of the research studies conducted in Thika have mainly focused on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with permanent shops or the Jua kali<sup>21</sup> activities within the established areas. In contrast, the involvement of street vendors in the Metropolisation process between the city, secondary towns, and hinterland has not been emphasized.

It was not practical to study Thika town because of its vast area, but the researcher identified specific locations which were considered popular with informal activities like street vending. The focal point considered was Commercial Street and its adjoining streets of Uhuru, Kwame Nkrumah, Stadium road, Kisii street, and Kenyatta Highway within Thika's CBD. These streets were chosen due to the intensity of the street vending activities, especially in the evening. Therefore, the study area was an area radiating around the focal point. Other areas of interest were the three formal markets in Thika, i.e., Moi (Mukiriti) Market, Jamuhuri Market, and Madaraka (Makongeni) Market. General Kago road was also crucial in this research because it connects Thika's CBD, Thika level-5 general hospital, Mount Kenya University, Thika prisons, Thika Technical Training institute, and Bidco oil refineries industry are areas that attract large populations daily.

### **3.1.2 Research Design**

Research design is the plan and structure of investigation that enables the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions (Kerlinger, 1986). Other researchers, such as Yin (2009), define research design as the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn concerning the initial questions of a study.

Various research designs are used, especially in social sciences, but the study's purpose guides the design's choice. The methods commonly used are experiments, surveys, archival analysis, histories, and case studies. This study, therefore, adopted survey research, which examined the flows of street vendors to Thika's CBD from the Nairobi metropolitan area and hinterlands of

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<sup>21</sup> Jua Kali is a Swahili word that means "hot sun", referring to small-scale informal activities, usually in the open air or hot sun.

Thika. A survey obtains information from a sample of people employing self-report, that is, the people responding to the researcher's questions. In this regard, the survey entails quantitative and qualitative approaches considering the expected data. Kumar (2012) defines quantitative research as systematically examining the cause-and-effect interactions among variables. A descriptive survey is necessary because it accurately portrays or accounts for the characteristics. Qualitative research, on the other hand, involves the interpretation of a phenomenon without depending on numerical measurements or statistical methods. It is mainly concerned with observing, listening, and interpreting phenomena (Zikmund et al., 2010).

In our current research, several in-depth interviews were held with key informants to improve the accuracy of the data collected. The biography of one street vendor was used and focused group discussions on some other street vendors together with interviews and observation. The researcher also used a participatory approach to an extent. Triangulation was also used, where observation was combined with interviews. Creswell (2009) says that the advantage of triangulation is that it entails both qualitative and quantitative methods to confirm, cross-validate, and corroborate research findings. When the two are used simultaneously, they minimize or reduce the weakness of another approach. Babere (2013) says that combining both quantitative and qualitative is to give each method an equal chance during the inquiry to integrate the research findings at the interpretation stage.

### **3.1.3 General approach**

Fieldwork was carried out in two phases between 2019 and 2020. The first phase targeted street vendors who mainly sell their goods along Commercial Street from 5 pm to 10 pm. The second phase consisted of in-depth interviews with various key informants

### **3.1.4 Selection of respondents for in-depth interviews**

Since the researcher needed specific information, some respondents were purposively selected because of being key actors as far as street vending is concerned in Thika. Purposive sampling was therefore used in their selection for the in-depth interviews. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), purposive sampling is used when a researcher wants to use cases with the required information. In the current study, some respondents were selected. These included a

Member of the County Assembly of Thika Township Ward, Chairmen of various associations such as Thika hawker's association, Mukiriti Market; Madaraka Market; Second-hand booksellers. Others include the Kiambu County enforcement officer, A Thika-based journalist, and two politicians (Aspirants for the 2017 Member of County Assembly seat). Other key stakeholders included are; An officer in the Department of environment, an officer in the Department of revenue collection, two county enforcement askaris<sup>22</sup>, two Matatu<sup>23</sup> drivers and their conductors, and Tuk-tuk drivers.

### **3.1.5 Methods of data collection**

#### **3.1.5.1 Street vendors' general survey**

Data collection for the general survey was carried out between 2019 and 2020. Before the survey, the researcher had familiarized himself with the study area during the pilot study in December 2018. Having been involved in International Conference on Urbanization and Street Vending in 2016, organized by IFRA, the researcher had research experience with Street vendors in Towns like Nairobi and Thika. The conference dealt with round table discussions in Nairobi and Kisumu, with some field research in Thika Town. The experience made it easy to build rapport with the street vendors and other respondents in Thika town.

The researcher was given three permits from the NACOSTI-National commission for science, technology, and innovation, County Commissioner Kiambu, and Governor Kiambu County's office (Appendix 4). The permits enabled the researcher to arrange for interviews, especially from the County offices.

#### **3.1.5.2 In-depth interview schedule**

The researcher met with the street vendors to conduct the in-depth interviews; some had already responded to the structured interview questions. The detailed interview was carried out according to the time of operations, i.e., day or night. It mainly took place from December 2019 to June

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<sup>22</sup> Askaris-Swahili name for Police

<sup>23</sup> Commuter Taxi

2020. The challenge of meeting most of the vendors was their busy schedules, especially between 5 pm and 7 pm since this is considered peak time. Due to the busy nature of street vendors, most of the interviews were conducted past 8 pm when few customers were being served. The other challenge was the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant very few people were willing to be interviewed, especially staff at Thika Sub-County offices. The researcher was forced to undertake phone interviews, especially for those working from home due to Covid-19 restrictions.

These interview-guided questions clarified some of the issues, and some of the questions have been highlighted to support the findings in the analysis of the study. As mentioned earlier, the interviews for the key informants and stakeholders were selected through purposive sampling.

### **3.1.6 Data Analysis**

The data collection analysis began in July 2020 with qualitative data, which provided explanations that helped the discussion process after being analyzed. The data collected was from written field notes, photographs, Maps, and documents. The documents included Daily newspapers, policy papers, and rules and regulations of the Moi market provided by the chairperson of the market. The document previews provided a useful source of information to strengthen data from other sources, as noted by Yin (2003). Analysis was done qualitatively concerning the tool used during the data collection process.

The data was collected through in-depth interviews, Content analysis from documents, interview questions, observation, and photographs. The observation was undertaken with the purpose of study in a particular aspect. The advantage of undertaking observation is that it provides useful evidence and adds a new dimension of understanding to the phenomena under investigation, as noted by Yin (2003). Observations were recorded on the types of products sold on different streets and the timing of these activities. Casual observations were recorded on the conditions of the spaces used by street vendors.

These were analyzed through themes developed in qualitative data. The process here included going through the field notes collected during an interview and checking through the responses of key informants. Several narrations have been quoted from the interviews as part of the



analysis and supporting the data collected.

### **3.1.7 Challenges to the studies**

Various challenges were experienced during the collection of data. One of the major challenges occurred during the acquisition of the research permits. The researcher had to obtain three permits (As shown in the Appendices) which took a lot of time during their acquisition. The first permit was obtained from the NACOSTI-National commission for science technology and innovation. The second one was to be received from the national government under the Ministry of Interior and coordination of the National government, which the county commissioner in Kiambu County represents. The third permit was to be obtained from the office of the Kiambu governor. The three permits were received at different intervals between January and the end of February 2020, having applied for them in December 2019. The data collection was delayed because he had to wait for them before embarking on data collection, especially in the Sub-county offices of Thika.

The major challenge came in March of 2020 when Covid-19 was declared a pandemic in Kenya. Therefore most of the Key informants who were to be interviewed, especially in the Government offices, were forced to work from home according to the orders from the Ministry of Health. The researcher had to mitigate this by use of telephone interviews which were quite expensive. The other challenge was experienced when the Nairobi metropolitan was put under lockdown. Traders and street vendors from Murang'a and other neighboring towns could not access Thika town, so it was a challenge to interview them. Then the worst part was when a 7 pm curfew was imposed, affecting most street vendors who normally trade in the evening. Therefore with the curtailed movement to Thika town and the imposition of curfew, the researcher had to reorganize his schedule.

The other challenge came when some interviews had to be abandoned halfway, especially with the County Askaris. Some demanded that for the interview to continue, the researcher had to give them some money so that the Askaris could continue providing more information. There was also the challenge of interviewing street vendors in their working places when they were busy serving their customers. Some street vendors were willing to be interviewed; however, this

was at the same time customers were being done, and therefore, there was a lot of interference. Initially, some street vendors were a bit suspicious of the researcher, who they thought was a County Askaris or was from the Criminal Investigation Department, and therefore unwilling to cooperate. It took the researcher some time to create rapport with the traders, especially with the assistance of the leaders of the street vendor's Association. The interview with the bank officials was also a bit challenging because the banks were not willing to give all the information about their customers or operations.



## **Chapter 4- Street Vendors and Urban Actors**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Actors are a range of people who play a part in a particular development or political scenario. It includes donors, activists, NGO workers, participatory practitioners, researchers, community members, government officials, and facilitators. The actors work within complex webs of power and relationships, which enable or be a constraint (IDS 2021). Several actors have influenced street vending within Thika town. Different actors interact within a certain space and time without acting in isolation. The interaction of actors tends to complement each other irrespective of their status, i.e., public or private actors, Formal or informal actors. The position of different actors within the street vending flow is very significant because it expands or curtails it using different strategies and their power of influence. For example, Government regulations and policies may reduce the flow of street vendors into the streets, while players such as customers and suppliers of goods to the street vendors may increase the flow.

### **4.2 Street vendors**

According to the street vendors (protection of livelihood) bill-Kenya (2019), an “informal trader” means a person engaged in vending articles, goods, wares, food items, or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public in a street, lane, sidewalk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, from a temporary built-up structure, and includes a hawker, peddler and all synonymous terms of the word;

The Indian version of the street vendors act of 2014 emphasizes that Street vendors could be stationary and occupy space on the pavements or other public/private areas or could be mobile and move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads, or could sell their wares in moving buses. As mentioned, hawkers face myriad challenges, especially urban governance, when undertaking their trading activities. The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS 2014) enumerates some of the advantages associated with street vendors in its study of five cities of Accra (Ghana) Ahmedabad, (India) Durban, (South Africa) Lima, (Peru) Nakuru, (Kenya)

### 4.3 Classification of Vendors in Thika

From the fieldwork, Thika town is where different forms of street vending exist. There are street vendors who move from one place to another, carrying their goods on their hands or shoulders; we also have those with temporary structures which display their goods on a mat or gunny bags. Jerome Monnet (2006) developed a framework to understand the various types of street vendors. Four characteristics define this framework; using Jerome's framework, in Thika first, we have street vendors who pay a monthly or yearly license to the sub-county of Thika. Most of these traders have semi-permanent structures to keep their products overnight. Good examples of these categories of street vendors are second-hand booksellers along Stadium Street, as shown in photo 3

*Photo 3 Semi-permanent stalls for street vendors*



Semi-permanent stalls along Stadium road. Most of the stalls are used by street vendors specialized in selling second hand textbooks. They hold licenses from the local authority that is paid for annually. (Author: 2020)

The second categories of street vendors are those with temporary permits to undertake trading activities in areas like road reserves, as shown in photo 4. These vendors do not have specific places to store their goods for overnight storage. Alternatively, these traders either take their

goods home in the evening or pay a fee to keep them in permanent stalls found at Moi (Mukiriti) market. Some have made arrangements with owners of some shops nearby to keep their goods overnight. Examples of these street vendors are stationed at the stadium wall along Kenyatta highway.

*Photo 4 Street vendors on road reserves*



Street vendors on the perimeter wall of Thika municipal stadium along Kenyatta highway. Most take their goods home or store them in permanent stalls in Mukiriti Market (Author: 2020)

The third category consists of vendors with no structures to sell; most display their goods on a bucket, gunny bags, or mats, as shown in photo 5. These street vendors are known to often “play hide and seek” with the county askaris because they have some intelligence that usually informs the rest of the impending crackdown. This group is ready to pay any bribe to get off the hook



when caught by the enforcement officers. When the local authority confiscates the goods, most street vendors may forfeit their goods because retrieving them back may be too expensive. In Thika, this category is mainly found at the junction of the stadium road and the commercial street. This category normally gets to the streets as early as 10 am and may leave the streets in the evening around 9 pm. These Street vendors normally start their trading in the morning till evening and avoid paying any fee to the local authority

*Photo 5 Daytime unauthorized Street vendors on Commercial street*



(Source: Author 2020)

The last category of vendors is those who move into the streets and pavements in the evening, especially from 5 pm, and stays up until midnight. This category sells various goods such as shoes, clothes, fruits, and cooked food, as shown in photo 6. Their reporting and stay in the streets depend on the seasons, meaning that during festive seasons like December, just before Christmas, closing time is midnight. During rainy seasons, trading takes a short time as the business is affected by these extreme weather conditions. During the electioneering or campaign

period, the vendors in this category normally move to the streets as early as 3 pm. As earlier noted, most of the local authority's crackdowns during elections are not undertaken frequently. Most of these traders come from neighboring towns like Ruiru, Juja, Githurai, Murang'a, and Nairobi.

*Photo 6 evening unauthorized Street vendors on Commercial street*



(Source: Author 2020)

To summarize the different types of informal traders in Thika, Table 5 can represent these four categories of street vendors. The table shows those traders who pay annual licenses, those with temporary daily permits, and those who are unauthorized.



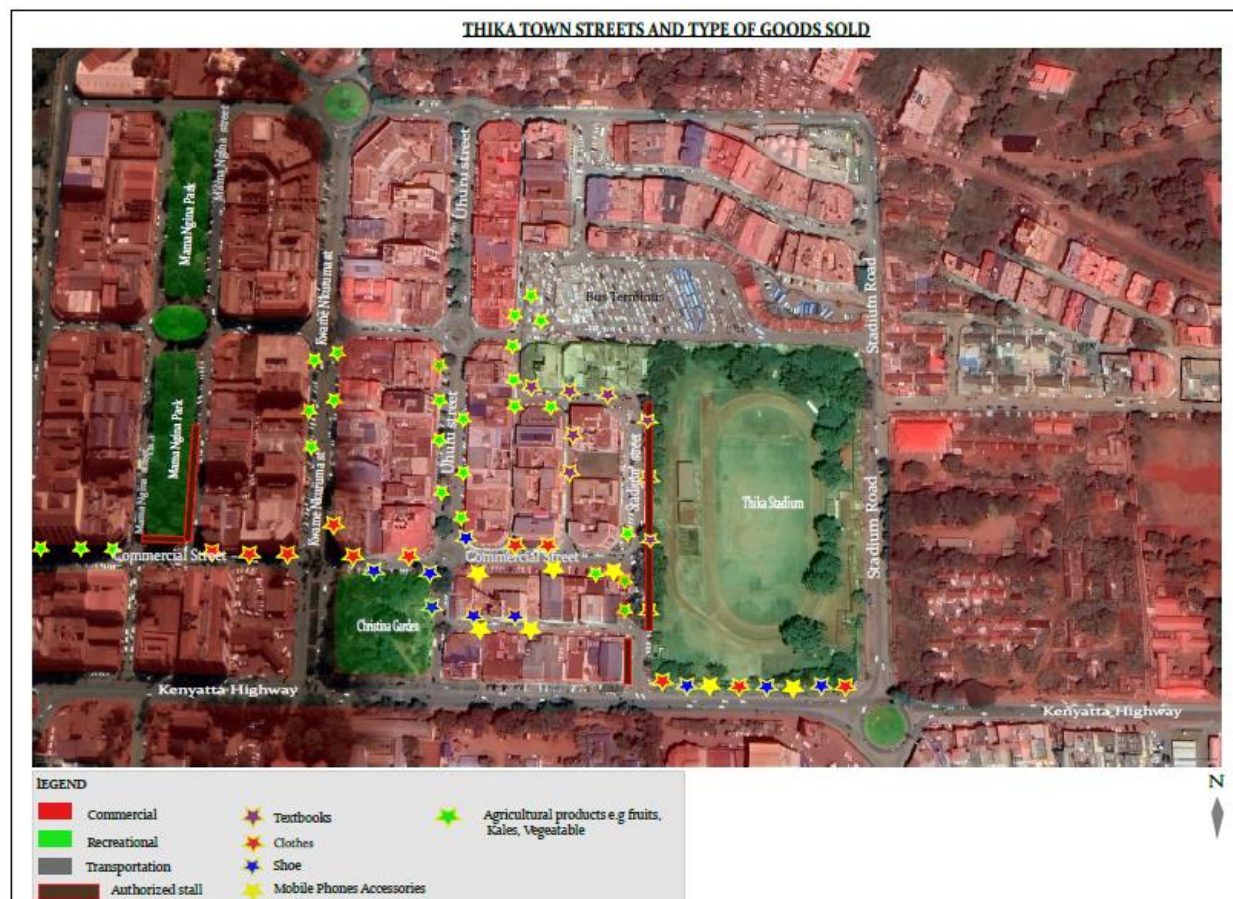
*Table 5 Types of street vendors in Thika*

<b>LEGALITY</b>	<b>STATIONERY VENDORS</b>				<b>MOBILE</b>
	<b>Market stalls</b>	<b>Semi-permanent stalls</b>	<b>Use of Table and Umbrella</b>	<b>Mat/Gunny bags/Buckets</b>	
Annual Licenses	Moi, Jamhuri and Madaraka Market	Second-hand Booksellers along stadium road, Mama Ngina drive stalls	-	-	-
Temporary Daily permits		Fruit sellers along Kisii street.	-Thika Stadium wall along Kenyatta Highway -Shoe shiners along a commercial street	-Daily newspaper vendors -Vendors who are physically challenged	-
Unauthorized	-	-	-	Evening vendors along Commercial, Uhuru, and Kisii Street. Mostly selling second-hand clothes/shoes/Groundnuts/vegetables/fruits, and Mobile phone accessories	Vendors selling masks, scratch cards, salad, handkerchiefs, sweets

(Source: Author 2020)

Different commodities are sold along the commercial and adjoining streets, as Map 6 shows some of these areas concentrated in Thika's CBD. Commercial Streets is popular for the sale of second-hand clothes, second-hand shoes, and fruits. Kisii Road, Kwame Nkrumah Street, Uhuru streets, and Stadium road are known for the sale of second-hand books, fruits, Kale, and vegetables

*Map 6 Streets and the types of goods sold*



(Source: Google earth slightly modified by the Author 2022)

Approximately 400 street vendors have appropriate space in the evening on the commercial street in Thika. From the fieldwork count done on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the number includes the vendors selling on the stadium wall connected to Commercial Street. Out of this, the researcher managed to interview 47 vendors selected randomly but mainly along Commercial

Street and the adjoining streets. Most of the interviews were conducted in the evening, as it was the best time to meet both the customers and vendors. Out of the 47 vendors, about 46% were between 18- 30 years, 45.5% were between 31-45 years, and ages 46 and above 8.5%. These statistics show that most street vendors are of working age bearing in mind that 91.5% are between 18-45 years. The data further indicated that those above 45 years are vendors who live in Thika. At the same time, a majority of those below 30 years are college students (either Mount Kenya University, Thika Technical Training Institute, or Jodan college) or are from the surrounding towns like Githurai, Ruiru, and even Nairobi. The results are similar to Moriango's (2017) study "*implication of contestation for urban space on streets: A Case of Mwihoko Street, Githurai - Kiambu County.*" According To Moriango's study, those traders below 35 years, 37% and those below 55 years, 44%; while Babere (2013), in her paper, struggle for space street vendors in Dar es Salaam, found that the majority of the street vendors were between the ages of 20-40 years.

Apart from their age, another striking difference was that most of the young vendors sold second-hand clothes, shoes, and telephone accessories. At their age, these youthful street vendors could pick items that were in fashion, especially to sell to their clientele, who were also young. The items sold by the young street vendors constitute an essential part of the socializing context (Kaufmann 1997, 111). Racaud (2015) notes that due to the influence of the city, the urban youths from small cities sell new products that are in fashion. The products are a medium of a style worn by these youthful street vendors when trading to attract young customers.

#### **4.4 Appropriation of space by street vendors**

The vendors' appropriate space in the streets of Thika is at a different scale. The time of the day determines who has suitable space before another.

Between 5 am and 8 am, street vendors that appropriated spaces in the town specialize in selling cooked food like tea/coffee Mandazi, boiled eggs, and chapati. Most street vendors have concentrated in the Matatu and bus stations, for example, along Commercial Street, the Main upcountry stage, and stadium road. The target here is the Matatu drivers, conductors, and security guards whose jobs entail waking up very early in the morning or those who have been

working overnight. Passengers who report to their duties early in the morning are also targeted because most might have left their homes early in the morning before breakfast. Other vendors observed during this morning are those dealing with the sale of handkerchiefs. The vendors rarely face any harassment because, at this time, county officials are yet to start their normal operations

Between 8 am and 5 pm, the vendors mainly found are those in semi-permanent structures who normally pay an annual license. As noted earlier in this chapter, the street vendors are mainly located along Mama-Ngina street and a long stadium road, mainly selling books as indicated on map 6 and photo 3; The other category found in the streets at this time are those without structures trading along Kenyatta Highway and sell their wares on the Thika stadium perimeter wall. Vendors who deal with fresh fruits along Kisii Street and those in the main upcountry bus station normally flow into their business during these times. All these traders are “partially” allowed to undertake their activities during the day by possessing either an annual license or a daily payment for occupancy of the space. The local authorities have granted this partial usage of the space. There are other categories of vendors also coming to the streets during this time of the day though not authorized. Groundnut sellers will be stationed at the junction of Commercial Street and Stadium road, as shown in photo 5. The majority of these vendors start streaming in at mid-day from 10:30 am. From the interview with Jean Claude on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019, the vendor says that most of the morning hours, i.e., between 8-9 am, one has to get his supplies from Jamhuri market, and then between 9 am to 10 am are utilized in the preparation of groundnuts. It takes a little time to have the best quality and be well-sorted. The journey to Thika town starts at 10 am, and arrival time depends on how far one is from the CBD. From the interview and the interactions with groundnut sellers, most of the sellers come from estates around Thika town.

For other street vendors who normally come to the streets in the evening, the morning hour is utilized in picking their supply of goods from the sources. For the vendors dealing with clothes, this is normally the time to pick up their supplies in Eastleigh, Gikomba, or Kamukunji. Vendors dealing with agricultural products normally utilize this time to get their goods from the Madaraka market or hinterlands of Thika, like Gatanga, Ruiru, or Gatundu.

From 5 pm to 10 pm, evening street vendors start to flow into the streets of Thika town. The

traders come with various means of transport available to them, e.g., Bicycles, Tuk-tuks, or Matatus, as shown in photo 7. Formal markets like Mukiriti and Jamhuri usually close at this time. Some traders from these markets also join the vendors in the street to capture commuters returning home after days' work. The office worker leaving an office to go home becomes a potential customer to a street vendor. At exactly 5 pm, the commercial street buzzes with activities as more street vendors join in the trading. The trading goes on until 10 pm when the number of commuters reduces from the main stage, and by now, most of the streets are empty. The only remaining people on the streets are travelers going for long distances or nightclubs, security guards, and revelers who are taken care-off by street vendors who sell goods overnight. The common items sold at this time of the night include coffee, groundnuts, boiled eggs, cooked food, and even condoms. During festive seasons like Christmas or New Year's Eve, the street is still busy all night, keeping street vendors vigilant.

#### **4.5 Frequency to the source of goods**

The movement to the source of goods defines another scale of activities of street vendors. The movement to the source of goods is done daily, weekly, or twice a week, depending on the turnover of the commodities in the market, the nature of the goods, or the availability of finances. The nature of the goods on offer is a major factor; agricultural goods are procured more frequently than durable goods. For example, Miss Margaret, who sells fruit pudding along stadium road, has to go to Madaraka market twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays) to get a fresh supply of pawpaws, mangoes, watermelons, and pineapples. The nature of her products guides Margaret's visit to the Madaraka market. Dealing with highly perishable goods and a lack of proper storage facilities forces her to buy the products in small quantities and visit the market twice a week. Her visits to Madaraka Market on Tuesdays and Fridays to pick up supplies ensure customers are served throughout the week.

*Photo 7 Street vendors appropriating space*



Street vendors setting up their products for sale at Commercial Street in the evening. Most use Gunny bag and use bicycles or Tuk-tuk to transport their commodities (Author :2020)

Mr. Omollo, another street vendor at Mama-Ngina Garden along Commercial Street, deals with items like umbrellas, ballet shoes, plastic shoes, and Masks. He normally gets supplies of new stock from Eastleigh in Nairobi weekly. Omollo buys goods in bulk since the nature of his goods is durable. Normally he stores his goods in a nearby shop at a small fee at the end of each week.



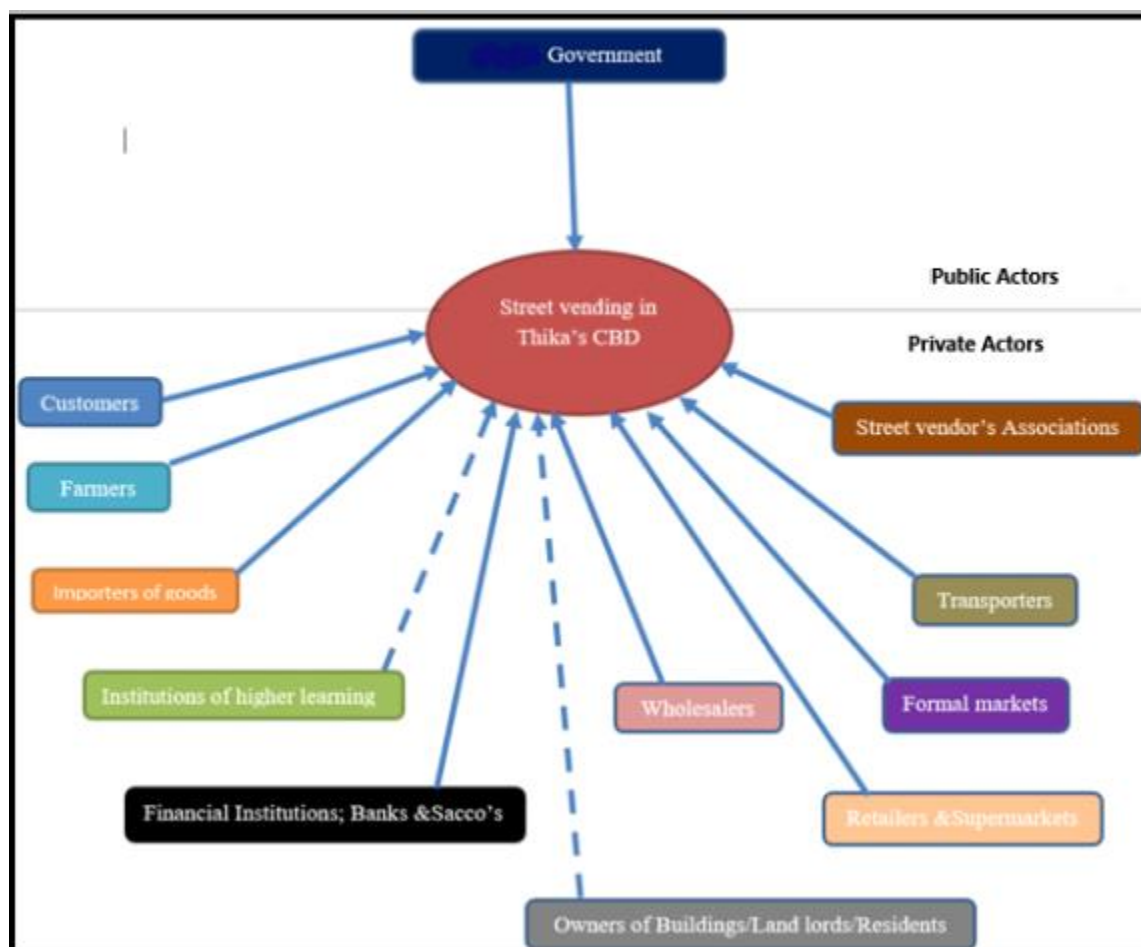
Racaud (2015) noted with vendors in Endarasha town that the highest frequency is two weekly trips to the source of supply and back. It is similar to Mr. Maina, who sells second-hand sweaters near Tabby house along Commercial Street; he normally buys new stock from Gikomba once or twice a fortnightly. Mr. Jean, who buys groundnuts at Jamhuri market, normally gets new supplies twice or thrice a week due to the high turnover of groundnuts.

#### **4.6 Classification of Actors**

In this thesis, the major actor is the street vendor as our unit of analysis. The other actors in the street vendors flow are classified into two major categories, i.e., the public and private. There are different minor classifications, especially when it comes to private actors. The public actors mainly consist of the two levels of government, i.e., the county and the national governments. The government is an important Actor in the street vending flow, especially on matters of regulations and policies that encourage or suppress informal trading at different scales depending on the time and space. We categorize Government as public because of being directly involved in all the activities in any part of the country, whether in the rural or urban areas. The actions of the government have a direct impact on what happens to the activities of a street vendor daily.

Private actors, on the other hand, are those that influence the street vendors' to flow in different ways regardless of policies and regulations imposed by the government. Classifying them according to their functions is necessary to account for their real impact on street vending matters. The actions of private actors may overlap in different ways; for example, the residents of Thika town may also double up as customers to street vendors. The transporters may also be the residents and, at the same time, the customers. The wholesalers or even sometimes the suppliers of goods from the rural areas may also sell their goods in the streets as vendors. Paulais & Wilhelm (2000) emphasize that the borders between each category of private actors are often difficult to trace as some business strategies involve switching from one type to another.

*Photo 8 Different types of Actors*



(Source: Author 2020)

We may have a category of actors in urban and rural areas within the private actors, especially when agricultural goods are involved. Some importers supply the goods in the street of Thika, for example, a wholesaler who buys groundnuts from Malawi and distributes them in the streets. There are also suppliers of cheap goods from china that finds their way to Thika through the Kamukunji market in Nairobi. Therefore, under the private actors, we have those who have some social interest in street vendors, including Street Vendors Associations such as KENASVIT, Thika Town Vendors Limited (TTVL), and Thika District Business Association (TDBA). Some actors provide essential services to street vendors such as Transporters, Financial institutions such as Banks and SACCOs. Other actors include owners and users of the urban spaces, such as Landlords, Real estate owners, and even Residents of Thika town. There is also a category of



private actors who sell goods to street vendors such as wholesalers and farmers. Traders such as single-unit shops and Supermarkets are other actors who compete with street vendors, especially on the type of goods on offer to customers. We also have customers, the street vendors who are made up of passengers, residents, and even a larger population of students who are in the institutions of higher learning within Thika town.

## **4.7 Public Actors**

### **4.7.1 The National Government**

As briefly discussed under the conceptual framework, public actors in the flows of street vendors comprise the Government. The devolved system of Governance in Kenya places two levels of government, i.e., the National government and the county Governments (Mwakuni 2018). The latter makes 47 counties in Kenya, each headed by Governors. The Counties are made up of several sub-counties led by the county administrators. Both the National and County Governments influence street vending in a major way, especially with their policies and regulations that control how a city or a town should be governed.

Within the National government, ministries are directly involved in the issues of informal livelihood activities, from the ministerial level to the street level. The Ministry of Industrialization, Trade, and Enterprise Development (MoITED) are overall in charge of trade in the country. In this ministry, there is the Department of Trade and Enterprise Development (SDT&ED). The department is in charge of establishing rules, registrations, policies, and laws that govern trading in the country. The Ministry establishes institutions that not only govern the trade in the country but also provide incentives that facilitate business operations in the country. This ministry collaborates with other ministries such as National Treasury and Planning, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development & Public Works.

The national governments have relentlessly strived to give a lot of attention to the informal and small business sectors with the hope that it will transform the nation. It is evident in the many Sessional papers, Bills, Acts of parliament, Policies, and the 2010 constitution. Most Examples

of the bills listed below have been discussed in the previous chapter:

- Sessional paper No.1 of 1986 focussing on the economic management for renewed growth
- The sessional paper No.2 of 1992 focuses on small enterprises and the development of the jua kali industry.
- The Republic of Kenya sessional paper 2 of 2005 on the development of SMEs for wealth and employment creation for the reduction of poverty
- The MSE Act of 2012
- The Sessional papers number 10 of 2012, which mainly focused on Vision 2030
- Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill, 2019

The Sessional Paper No.10 of 2012 on Kenya's vision 2030 perhaps was an important document as far as the informal sector is concerned. Vision 2030, the blueprint of Kenya's development plan, recognizes the importance of the informal sector and micro-enterprises. It emphasizes that the industry should be supported in ways that will raise productivity, distribution and increase jobs, owner's incomes and public revenue" (G.O.K 2007). The Kenya vision 2030 also seeks to establish and strengthen informal trader's associations to form SACCOs to enhance savings. Mobilization to provide affordable finance and enhancement of management of the existing SACCOs.

Another act that addresses street vendors' issues is the MSE act of 2012. The object and purpose of this Act were to provide a legal framework to promote development and regulate all small and micro enterprises that fall under this category. The act would provide an enabling environment and promote an entrepreneurial culture and representative associations.

Unfortunately, some of these legislations have never been implemented and remain on the shelves of parliament to gather dust. Funding for small under the SME Act 2012 has been elusive, as noted by the national chairperson of KENASVIT, Mr. Kwatche (IEA 2015). The funding was created under section 51 of the MSE Act of 2012. The Act also has provisions for

financing the capacity building of MSEs, research & development, innovation, and technology transfer. KENASVIT's chairperson laments that the delay in establishing the MSE fund is a violation of the law and an impediment to the growth of the sector (IEA 2015).

The County governments, on the other hand, use by-laws to govern the activities of urban centers within their jurisdiction. Some by-laws have been in operation since colonial times and continue to affect informal activities in the urban spaces of cities and towns (Kamunyori 2007, Morange 2015). The new constitution in Kenya in 2010 brought in the County government, which has brought in many changes politically and socially in the counties. Still, some have continued to maintain the status quo as far as these by-laws are concerned.

One of the By-law that is still in use in Thika is the general nuisance. It is a law that is used to evict street vendors who are perceived to obstruct activities in the major streets of Thika town. The law defines the process by which street vendors would be evicted, and the sub-county authorities took their goods. The head of an inspectorate<sup>24</sup> in Kiambu County says...

*On-street vending, we apply the General nuisance law but do it diplomatically. We only allow traders to use the space in front of their shops but pay for it as an additional license. The owner to relative can sublet the spaces and friends. In case of any misuse of this space, the shop owner bears all the liabilities.*

To recover their goods, the hawker can pay some small fee in exchange for their goods. A keen observation of these two levels of government indicates a very different approach when dealing with street vendors. While the National government is trying to encourage the informal sector by coming up with some Bills/Acts of parliament, the County Government is completely on a different view. Street vendors perceive the strict application of nuisance by-law to frustrate their activities. Racaud (2018) notes that local by-laws contradict National legal legislation in his research. Therefore, in this context, the National Government may recognize the importance of street vending in creating jobs, but the county or sub-county government implementing the By-laws on the urban space may hold a different opinion.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with an Inspectorate officer in Kiambu County on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

From the field observation and interviews, street vendors from Nairobi have admitted that one of the reasons for invading Thika was the tough laws applied in the governance of street vending in Nairobi. The flows of goods and people from Nairobi to Thika seem to take advantage of how “diplomatic” the General nuisance law is applied to the latter.

#### **4.7.2 County Government**

As noted earlier, Thika town is within Kiambu County, one of the 47 Counties in the country. The data collected from Thika Sub-County offices show that the issue of street vending is still challenging and yet to get a permanent solution. The daily activities of street vendors in the town are affected by several departments. These departments include: -

- i) Trade, Tourism, Cooperatives & Enterprise Development,
- ii) Finance and Economic Services.

##### **4.7.2 .1 Department of Trade Tourism, Cooperatives & Enterprise Development**

In an interview with an officer in the ministry of Trade Tourism, Cooperatives & Enterprise Development, they planned to construct markets for informal traders. The county had a list of priority areas: Gatundu, Limuru, Ruiru, Githurai, Kikuyu, Kihara, Thika, and Juja. Some of these modern markets are shown in photo 9.

*Photo 9 Selected modern markets in Kiambu County*



Gatundu Market



Juja Market



Ruiru Market

(Source: Author 2020)

According to the Governor of Kiambu, the upgrading and construction of most markets were to be completed by the end of 2021<sup>25</sup>. These markets are part of the Kiambu government's plans to not only upgrade their existing markets in deplorable conditions but also deal with street vending issues. The plans from the ministry of trade are that most street vendors will be relocated to these markets. From the various studies, street vendors have always resisted any plans to move them to these markets. Morange (2015) notes an example where the street vendors came back to Nairobi's CBD after the efforts to take them to the Muthurwa market faced myriad challenges. There are other examples in Africa; for example, in Tanzania, the efforts of compelling street vendors to move to the Machinga complex, especially those who had erected makeshift stalls at Karume Stadium in Dar es Salaam faced several challenges. According to Babere (2013), the

<sup>25</sup> Business Daily, Wednesday October 09 2019

street vendors complained that the new market was far from their area of operation and that the charges to acquire the space were too high, i.e., six times what they initially paid. There was also a problem with how the stalls were constructed, suggesting the non-involvement of street vendors in the process.

The case is not different from one in Lusaka, Zambia, as Hansen (2010) explains that despite the provision of formal market infrastructure, hawkers still decided to trade from the streets. Hansen urges governments to develop more inclusive policies to accommodate all traders in decision-making. It will ensure that hawkers' are assisted according to their practical needs and not perceived needs, such as building formal market infrastructure for all.

In the newly constructed Juja Market and the upgrading of some sections, there are 700 stalls (355 -wholesale market and 345-retail). The old market, which has been upgraded as seen in photograph 10, is the retail market supposed to operate from mid-day. The new multi-story building is the wholesale market supposed to run from morning until noon. A walk through the new market indicates some empty spaces/stalls. To acquire a stall in the new market, one needs 50,000/-(389.86 Euros) though the price is expected to rise before the end of 2021. Those in the retail market pay a daily fee of 20/-(0.16Euros) and were allocated the stall through balloting.

*Photo 10 Old and new Juja Market*



(Source: Author 2020)

In an interview with Robert<sup>26</sup>, a retail trader and a boda-boda<sup>27</sup> rider at the new Juja market, he explains some challenges with the new market....

*....80% of those allocated in the market were outsiders leaving only 20 stalls for the original traders. It has brought a lot of friction among traders to the extent that aggrieved traders went back to the streets to continue selling their goods. There was also a plan to have those selling perishable goods sell them on the ground floor while those dealing with durable goods sell them on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The plan to have traders selling highly perishable goods on the ground floor failed because the people in charge did it haphazardly. Lastly, getting a stall is too expensive for some small traders who struggle to get capital to buy their stock. All this has not gone down well with the traders; no wonder majority have gone back to the streets of Juja and others to the streets of Thika, a distance of about 10km*

The above example of the new Juja market is a replica of, i.e., Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Lusaka. The street vendor's accessibility to customers is a key consideration and is mostly located where there is high human traffic. Learning from these examples, Kiambu County and, by extension, Thika administrators should find another way of dealing with street vendors. If the idea of markets is to relocate street vendors, the plans will likely fall into the same trap of the three cities of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka. If the project is to rehabilitate the markets to make the market traders more comfortable, then it might be a good move, especially for the market traders.

#### **4.7.2 .2 Enforcement and administration department**

Many County governments have officers responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcing county By-laws /regulations. These officers are called County enforcement officers or "Council askaris" as most of them were inherited from the defunct local authorities. Mwakuni (2018) notes that counties have organized their officers (County askaris) responsible for compliance

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<sup>26</sup> Interview at Juja Market on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021

<sup>27</sup> motor cyclists who ferry passengers or sometimes non-motorised transport-mainly bicycle taxis

with and enforcing the county laws differently. The County askaris continue to perform similar functions in almost all the counties, which include:-

- (a) Enforcement of and compliance with County laws and regulations;
- (b) Patrol and guarding of access points;
- (c) Controlling crowds;
- (d) Protection of County government property;
- (e) Providing market security.

These are the same functions that the former local government was undertaking. In the Thika sub-county, the enforcement department collaborates with the administration department. The department enforces bylaws on behalf of other departments like finance-when checking on traders who have paid their annual trading license. The enforcement team also ensures parking fees and stickers have been paid. The team also assists other departments like Public Health to check on the construction of buildings (plus other structures) and if done according to the required standards.

The department is also in charge of guarding the county premises and properties and collaborates closely with the national Government through the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Police. Each sub-county has an enforcement officer who reports to the head of the Kiambu County inspectorate. For a long time, Thika has experienced law and order, especially in the governance of CBD, as the issue of street vending was not as severe as being experienced currently. An interview with the Kiambu County inspectorates reveals that before the campaign in the run-up to the 2017 elections started, Thika town was very organized. In the past, Boda-boda and Tuk-Tuk could not access the CBD and only stopped at some designated areas. Informal trading was restricted to authorized markets like Moi, Jamhuri, and Madaraka. To ensure law and order, the enforcement department applies general nuisance law when dealing with public space governance. The traders can use the space before their shops but pay for it as an additional license. The shop owner can sublet the spaces to other people, such as relatives or



friends. The officer in charge of the Kiambu County inspectorate<sup>28</sup> says....

*During the campaign and run-up to the 2017 elections, there was pressure to allow street vendors into the CBD by politicians who were looking up for votes. One politician is purported to have brought street vendors from Githurai and Kayole, promising them to undertake their business freely in Thika Town without harassment. Mama-Ngina Garden had been allocated to some of these traders until the demonstrating Moi market traders disrupted the allocation referring to the traders who were to be assigned as “foreign.”*

The interview with the County inspectorate clearly shows the influence of politicians on the running of a department in the County. Despite the relevant provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and the County Governments Act, 2012, the enforcement department has powers to operate independently. Other than the interference of their duties, Mwakuni (2018) points out other challenges experienced by council askaris within the enforcement department and which include:

- (a) Inadequate legal and institutional framework;
- (b) Lack of capacity for the enforcement of county laws by the counties;
- (c) Corruption;
- (d) Lack of a uniform code of conduct for county askaris;
- (e) Devolution still novel to county askaris and the public; and
- (f) Lack of county courts to resolve disputes involving county governments and to enforce county laws.

The challenges facing the Thika enforcement team are not anything different from the ones mentioned by Mwakuni (2018). Apart from Political meddling on some of the By-laws and

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with an Inspectorate officer in Kiambu County on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

officers being threatened to lose their jobs or transfers; other challenges listed down by the department during the interview with the officer in charge include-

i) Mobility and logistical challenges due to limited resources-The department lack enough vehicles to cover a vast area of Thika, which goes as far as Gatuanyaga. The department also lacks some basic tools needed for their duties; for example, most officers lack uniforms, Raincoats, torches, and batons, especially those entrusted with guarding county properties and premises at night.

ii) Most enforcement officers are political appointees who did not undergo proper training. Recruitment of county askaris is done without considering appropriate qualifications. There is not enough time for training enforcement officers, and therefore lack of proper skills for handling citizens. Some county askaris were recruited after the election without appropriate interviews and vetting as politicians paid payback to all the young men and women on his campaign bandwagon. This act is very common, especially after elections.

iii) Disciplining “politically appointed law enforcers” (County askaris) is quite a challenge as most of them are deemed to have a “godfather.” The department gave some statistics, out of the total 614 in 2018 county Askaris, 434 were recruited after the new leadership in the county took over in 2017. It explains the shortage of important tools needed in their workplace, like uniforms.

iv) Lack of motivation: Most law enforcers have yet to receive their salaries from September 2019. The most affected ones are newcomers, resulting in bribes from street vendors. Others have left the service to get greener pastures elsewhere.

The chairperson<sup>29</sup> of Thika town hawker’s welfare (operating at stadium wall) comments on the issue of enforcement department....

*The Thika sub-county enforcement team is overwhelmed with the big numbers of street vendors spread within the CBD. For the County askaris to organize daily operations, they must hire police to accompany the team. Using simple*

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<sup>29</sup> interview on 18/1/2020

*calculations, they will need to pay Kshs.1,000 for each police and Ksh.1,000 for each gun hired, meaning a total of Kshs.2,000 (15.64Euros) for armed police in operation. For effective operation, more police officers are needed. It even becomes more expensive because they have to pay their law enforcers for the overtime. From these calculations, it is as if the county government has already lost the battle of bringing law and order to the town, especially concerning street vendors. That is why you can see street vendors everywhere in town.*

According to the officer in the enforcement department, few solutions have been sorted to end the challenges in street vending issues. The department involves street vendor's association leaders in their meetings through Public Private Partnership (PPP). The sessions are meant to sensitize them to the plan of action by the County government, but unfortunately, most of the street leaders fail to attend. Only a few follow; normally, the same ones appear in all other meetings. The problem occurs when a major decision is taken; the vendors are usually the first to complain against authorities for not involving them.

In 2010-2011, the county tried to address the issue of street vending by closing a section of the road to allow street vendors to make their trade. The specific road that used to be closed was Kisii Street, which worked perfectly because the county could collect some revenue. The program, unfortunately, lasted for less than two years because the Shopkeepers and other business people complained of the undue advantage by the street vendors over their establishment. The shopkeeper argued that street vendors do not pay taxes, whereas street vendors sell the same item and can afford to sell at low prices. A former Nairobi town clerk serving in Thika town in the same capacity had brought the initiative. Traders from Moi market complained that street vendors diverted customers to Kisii Street to buy their goods and criticized the program. The argument was that the street vendors were allowed to sell in the CBD while traders in Moi Market were at the town's margin.

According to the department, the last solution would be constructing a multi-story building where traders will be arranged according to the type of products they sell. In these arrangements, the customers will have to choose the section from where to buy goods. The only challenge with this solution is the place to construct the market within the CBD, as no empty spaces exist.

#### 4.7.2 .3 Physical Planning Department

According to the Physical planning department in Thika, street vending is partially planned for, especially where the sheds are put along the road reserves; otherwise, all the other informal activities are not necessarily planned. Good examples are shades along the Thika Main stage and the stadium road. The department understands that the proliferation of street vending activities in town is for the need to uplift their economic status, especially the urban poor; inadequate enforcement and governance issues

Regarding space for informal activities in Thika, the department acknowledges the challenges of meeting the demands, which far outweigh the space supply. However, elaborate planning and scheduling can partly address the issues. The town planner<sup>30</sup>, an officer in the department, laments that the spaces for informal livelihood activities in Thika are controlled by political influence rather than professional control. Political power makes the whole process of planning to be very ineffective. On addressing the intensification of Street vending activities in Thika, the Town planner notes...

*In collaboration with the Thika sub-county authorities, the county government can identify specific locations and improve them for street vending. Pre-fabricated stalls on specific points to be shared among the vendors; scheduling time, especially after working hours, like from 5 pm; formalize the sector by anchoring them in the Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plans (ISUDP). Active participation of street vendors in self-regulation is the key to solving their problems.*

The department notes that the current regulations for informal activities are not in tandem with the dynamic nature of street vending. Informal trading is seasonal driven; for example, during school closure or opening, it also increases, like during valentine's eve when the need for flowers sharply increases. All the dynamics are not anticipated in existing statutory regulations. The

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<sup>30</sup> Interview on 18/2/2020 at the Thika sub county offices near Thika stadium

department agrees that no formal regulation exists on street vending save for outdated defunct local authority By-laws where vendors could apply to the Town plan committee for permits.

In the current plan, no specific areas are allocated for street vending activities apart from road reserves that are informally being accepted for the purpose, for example, the stadium wall. The department occasionally invites street vendor leaders during planning, but they do not attend consultative meetings in good numbers. Some other stakeholders involved in the planning of Thika town include the Business community, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and a few NGOs. The Planning department agrees that there is a lot of political interference with their activities and a lack of adequate resources to actualize their plans.

#### **4.7.2.4 Finance and Trade Department.**

The department has registered approximately 50,000 small business enterprises in Thika town, of which 1,000 are considered informal traders. According to the department's records, 60% of informal traders can renew their licenses between January and the deadline, which comes in March every year.

The department usually offers single business permits enacted under the finance act, traditionally amended every financial year through public participation. The issuance of single business permits is for the business activities carried out within Thika, but this is not applicable for those in the informal businesses because it is not under their provisions. For issuance with business licenses, one has to fulfill the following:-

- Fill out an application form
- Copy of the identification card of the owner
- The KRA pin
- Plot number
- Business name if the business is registered

The finance department determines License charges based on its policies and the size of the enterprise. The revenue department has to make a site visit for all these determinations. The department engages the trader's associations, such as Thika District Business Associations, in

their meetings when matters concerning businesses in Thika are on schedule. The meetings are held when an urgent need arises where it is deemed important to involve the trader's associations. Public participation before enacting some laws is required under the by-laws, for example, when amending the Finance Bill or enacting a County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP).

The department acknowledges the major challenges posed by the widespread hawking in Thika's public spaces due to unemployment in the town and the country. According to the department, traders lack information on the need to pay levies for better delivery of services by the County to its citizens. There is also laxity in applying the ICT-provided platforms by the County Government, especially in getting information about formalization processes.

In collaboration with Transport and physical planning, the trade department is responsible for managing the business within Thika and the designation of trading spaces. The three departments apply existing by-laws in governing the Thika sub-county but also formulate some by-laws to govern urban spaces on the need to need basis. The by-laws have existed since the defunct local authorities and are still used for regulation and normalcy within the sector. Secondly, the by-laws are used to safeguard public assets against misuse and for better service delivery to the public. Even after the creation of the counties, the by-laws have been used to mark out the public spaces for their easy management. It has enabled easier movement of people and traffic within the CBD. In conclusion, the revenue<sup>31</sup> officer notes that...

*The long-term objective of the sub-county is to construct trading shades and stalls for ease of regulations and control of the sector and secondly for registration of all informal groups with a database including full personal information. In order to achieve these objectives, we (the finance department) are budgeting to construct low-cost shades for the traders—secondly, provision funds like Jijenge funds to the SMEs. For loans at low or no interest rates to boost their incomes in the future. My personal view on public spaces and the informal economy is that there is a need for a future layout plan for Thika Town and its environs for the*

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<sup>31</sup> In an interview with the revenue officer on 22/3/2020

*proper designation of public spaces and placement of informal traders in a centralized location for appropriate monitoring and controls.*

#### **4.7.2 .5 Environment & Natural Resources Department**

The department is in charge of all the cleaning of Thika town every morning and usually starts at 4 Am before the day becomes very busy. Cleaning used to be done at 11 pm, but we had to change the time when the government declared a country-wide curfew due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The curfew imposed by the government normally starts at 10 pm and to 4 am. The department's objective is to regain the lost glory of Thika town, being amongst the cleanest town in the country.

The influx of street vendors in the streets of Thika at the beginning of 2016 meant that the department had to triple its efforts to maintain the town's cleanliness. Plans are underway to provide dustbins in Thika's streets to preserve the town's hygiene and easier collection of dirt from the town. It is necessitated by the amount of trash collected from the CBD every morning. The department collaborates with informal workers who have picked plastics for recycling at the Kang'oki dumping site. There are plans to hire the waste pickers permanently in the future, especially in partnership with private organizations like the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), Kenya PET Recycling Company (Petco), and other stakeholders.

On the issue of street vending in Thika, the officer<sup>32</sup> in the department had the following to say in an interview

*I am not ruling out the political influence in the invasion of street vendors from 2016. Right now, there are so many issues revolving around politics. The politicians are influencing the implementation of some by-laws, which impact our work. Sometimes I cannot enforce a certain bylaw concerning littering by street vendors because they will call a political leader within the county, and my job will be on the line. So we are helpless when it comes to the issue of street vending, and therefore we are forced to mind our own business and concentrate on cleaning the*

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<sup>32</sup> interview conducted on 7/7/2020

*town*

The department clarifies that street vending should not occur in parks such as Mama-Ngina or Christina Gardens. The only exemptions in accessing these spaces are informal traders providing services such as Nail polish or those applying Cutex to women. The other group that has since suffered from the rehabilitation of Christina gardens is the freelance photographers who have since left the park.

World environmental day was celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in the sub-county of Thika yard, as shown in photo 11. The department invited all informal workers (waste pickers) from the Kang'oki Dumping site to recognize them to ensure cleanliness in the town. The meeting was graced by the Governor of Kiambu County and was addressed by the environment department, who outlined their efforts to clean Thika town and the surrounding estates. The issue of street vendors kept coming up in the meeting, with the chairman of the Thika District Business Association reminding the governor of the need to clear hawkers from the town. In his speech, the governor promised to ensure that all the streets in the town were cleared and all the street vendors provided alternative sites.

*Photo 11 Kiambu Governor addressing informal workers (waste pickers)*



(Source: author 2020)



### **4.7.3 Political environment**

As mentioned in chapter 1, Politicians usually are major players as far as street vending flows are concerned. Heightened political activities in Kenya normally start one year before the general elections, with the climax being the swearing-in of the elected candidates. During this period, “roadside declarations” and promises are made to street vendors, which, unfortunately, most end up disappointed after elections. Influential politicians give clear directives on how street vendors should be treated within the CBD of any town during the election period to get votes from street vendors in return during the general elections. The same was experienced in Dar es Salaam Tanzania during the run-up to the 2005 elections when the local authority intervention ceased, as noted by Babere (2013) due to political interference. After the elections in 2006, the street vendors selling on Congo Street in Dar es salaam returned to spaces in Temeke stereo and Makumbusho markets.

The sub-county authority interventions against the activities of street vendors slacken off during this time. In a bid to secure positions such as Members of County Assemblies (MCA), Members of parliament (MP), Senator or even Governor, the politicians ignore by-laws governing urban areas temporarily for free appropriation by the street vendors. The politicians seem to “take over” CBD as the sub-county officials watch out helplessly because their positions in the local authority may be on the line if perceived to interfere with the operations of street vendors. During the run-up to the 2017 elections, the vendors were seen appropriating prime areas in Thika town as early as 10:00 am, unlike during the normal period when most of them used to come at 6 or 7 pm to start their businesses. This early appropriation of urban spaces ended immediately after the new County leadership was sworn into power.

The politicians, in this case, Use Street vendors as a resource during the voting season and, therefore, must be managed well (Schlegel, 2018). Thika town has experienced these political influences, a perfect example in the 2017 general elections. In an interview with the current chairman of Moi market, he narrates how during the campaign period former governor in Kiambu County promised the street vendors that he would give them space at Mama-Ngina Garden (Within Thika’s CBD) to undertake their daily activities. On the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of September, the street vendors went to the said Garden to allocate the space, but their plan was

aborted. There are various explanations as to why the plans flopped; the chairperson of Mukiriti market says that not all the stakeholders were involved in these plans. Another complaint was; why “foreign” vendors (Githurai and Murang’a and surrounding towns) could be allocated space within Thika while they had spaces in their towns as market traders rallied to block hawkers from other towns. It brings to focus the arguments about the rights of the city (Lefebvre 1974)

This period also witnesses many voters being “exported” from one town to another to support a particular candidate. Kiambu County enforcement officers<sup>33</sup> reveal that ....

*Some people were “exported” as far as from Kayole and Githurai by a certain politician to register in Thika as voters (Kayole and Githurai 44 are both in Nairobi County). Therefore, most “exported” voters were technically taken to Thika and had been doing business in the town. Some were recruited in the Thika sub-county as enforcement officers from the two estates outside Kiambu County.*

The politics of the general elections and street vending are further elaborated by street vendors who sell along the junction between commercial street and Uhuru street. Mr. Bidan<sup>34</sup>, a street vendor who sells blouses, comes from Kandara (Murang’a County) to Thika's streets in Swahili...

*“Wakati wa uchaguzi sisi huwa na wakati mzuri kibiashara kwa maana askari wa kanju huwa hawatufukuzi tunapofanya biashara yetu. Huwa tunakuja Thika wakati wowote bila kuogopa kwa maana wanasiasa huwa wanatutetea lakini tunajua ni kwa muda kidogo tu. Baada ya uchaguzi lazima kila mtu ajipange kwa maana sheria za kanju huwa sasa zinaanza kutumika. Mwaka wa 2017 ulikuwa mzuri kwa maana tulifanya biashara vizuri bila pingamizi nyingi haswa kwa maana baada ya uchaguzi kulikuwa na marudio ya uchaguzi wa urais baada ya Jaji Mkuu Maraga kusema urudiwe tena”*

*“During elections, we usually have ample time to do our business in Thika town.*

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<sup>33</sup> interview on 13/3/2020

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Bidan on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019

*It is because politicians usually safeguard our interests, but we usually know it is for a short time. After the elections, we have to organize how we do our business because the local authority by-laws come to effect again. In 2017, we had a good time because we did our business without harassment, especially because we even had a repeat election for the president's seat after its nullification by Chief Justice Maraga”.*

Due to their size and network capacity, street vendors are important social and political resources that need to be mobilized during the election years. This necessity of the political elite to integrate the informal traders is an important opportunity, as elections appear to be a system of integration for them (Racaud & Schiegel 2016). Elections are also an opportunity to give street traders a recognized and accepted voice in the public area that would not be available without the elections.

*Box 1: Geopolitics or representation?*

This box presents how a politician struggles to defend his constituents and is entangled in the politics of street vending.

The current Member of the county assembly (MCA) of Thika Township was formerly vending juice within the Town and therefore says he is best placed to defend their rights. I met the MCA on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 in Thika town and engaged in almost a 2-hour interview. According to the legislature, approximately 300 genuine hawkers do business within Thika town. I ask him why he has not settled them since his election in 2017, to which he responds...

*All the plans to settle the 300 hawkers were on course until Mukiriti market traders demonstrated in the Town and scuttled all my projects. I'm annoyed because the Mukiriti market is not in my Township ward. Still, the neighboring Hospital ward was against the allocation of street vendors within my jurisdiction. My constituents must be prioritized, and I am not concerned about what happens in the neighboring wards.*

The MCA emphasizes that these people elected him during the 2017 elections and have to pay

back by giving them priority regarding the allocation of vending sites. Regional politics within Kiambu County has affected plans for his constituents. Accordingly, some Wards are favored because of being loyal to the Governor, while others miss these crucial resources because MCA leads them. The latter are perceived to be in opposition to the County chief. It is the reason the Township ward has not been favoured because of his differences with the Governor. The situation, according to him, was even worse during the regime of the second governor, who was impeached. Some of the accusations were squandering the money meant for development. The MCA claims that part of the money the ousted Governor embezzled was to finance youth projects in his Township ward.

The issues of representation and the right to space in Thika's CBD come to focus. The MCA stand is that one must prove to be a voter within the Township ward to get his support. The same support is given if one gets in trouble as a street vendor. Therefore a trader has to change his voter's card and can freely call the MCA when in trouble with the local authority police while doing business within the town.

On the question of how he is addressing the issue of street vending in Thika town, the MCA responds....

*My major priority is the completion of roads and street lights along the CBD, enabling people to work at night, and allowing a 24-hour economy, especially for street vendors. We have also agreed with the business community to enable street vendors to start their businesses from 6 pm onwards. However, due to the covid-19 pandemic, we have revised their timings so that they can start trading from 4 pm to be at home by 7 pm due to curfew regulations.*

According to the MCA, there are two places where street vendors can be settled; one area is at Thika prison, which occupies a big chunk of land. He argues that street vendors can be allowed to occupy this prime area to earn their livelihood. Since the prison is a correction facility, it can be removed from the town Centre and relocated to the outskirts of the town. According to the MCA, the demand for goods sold by street vendors is higher than having the prison in the middle of the town.

The second alternative land is Thika police yard which has a lot of space and is near human

traffic. It can fit well for street vendors who follow human traffic, especially in urban spaces. The other solution would be closing streets so hawkers can do their business on certain days, like weekends, when the car traffic is not very heavy.

Finally, the politics of Thika has affected the development plan of the town; the other two levels of leadership, i.e., the Member of Parliament for Thika town and the current Governors, seem to be engaged in the supreme battle over the “ownership of the town” or who has more influence in the run-up to the 2022 general election. According to the MCA, this competition (between the Governor and Thika M.P) has led to a lot of duplication of duties between the two offices, leaving the streets of Thika to anybody who wants to get in and do business.

Field Notes 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 (Author)

The political actors seem to have much to do with the governance of urban spaces in Thika. The MCA appears to clearly understand Kiambu's geopolitics, which is why he always fights to “protect” his vendors who will deliver the votes in the upcoming general elections. The stand that one has to be a voter within the Township ward seems to have attracted more people who have changed their voting areas to the ward to be “protected” by the MCA.

The struggle on who has the major political influence in Thika town between the current governor and the area Member of Parliament gives room for informal traders who are allied to the two politicians to take advantage and trade freely. When the county council police harass one group, these street vendors call upon the politician to get their liberty back. It is confirmed by the County inspectorate officers who cannot intervene for fear of losing their jobs which are always on the line. The County inspectorate officer gives an example of how he was transferred to another Sub-County after the 2017 elections for a crackdown on street vendors during the political campaigns trying to get off some street vendors. The officer back in Thika feels uncomfortable dealing with street vendors.

#### 4.7.4 Pavement politics

Street vendors and the police have fought in several instances in Thika town. One of the candidates for Kiambu County governor in 2017 (Hon. Waititu, who ultimately won the position) made a promise to the street vendors that he would provide them with space at Mama Ngina Gardens in Thika's central business district to do their daily business. The street vendors attempted to claim the space that was allegedly allotted to them in Mama Ngina Gardens on the night of September 4 to 5, 2017, however their scheme failed. Many justifications may be offered. Some market merchants in Mukiriti assert that because they were excluded from the various planning stages of the space allotment, the governor-campaign elect's pledges never came to pass. They complained that “foreign” vendors from Githurai and Murang’a were allocated space within the CBD while those from Thika were confined in Mukiriti Market. This brought forth the question as to who has the right to the city. The police evicted the street vendors who had occupied the Mama Ngina Gardens. Ultimately, the governor ruled out any plans to appropriate the Gardens due to pressure mounted by the market traders in Thika town. The governor advised all traders to go back to their initial working areas as he looked for a solution to the issue. A part from this scenario, there are instances where the chairman of the formal traders association (TDBA) has threatened to evict street vendors in the pavements of Thika if they didn’t do it voluntarily. He is quoted saying the following on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 during an open forum....

*“All hawkers trading within Thika have been given up to Sunday 17th of February 2019 to vacate the streets of Thika’s CBD or else they face the full wrath of the law. It was agreed that these vendors will only be allowed on the streets beginning at 7 pm when the formal businesses close shop. Any hawker who will operate within the CBD during the day will be arrested and charged in court. Thika hawkers have been allocated some space along the stadium wall where they will operate during the day,”*

It is the above statements that anger street vendors which creates tension between then formal traders and street vendors. For the formal traders, the streets belong to the pedestrians and the verandah and pavements near their shops belong to their customers. For the traders in the formal

markets of Mukiriri and Jamuhuri, the urban spaces in Thika belong to the “Thikarians” (residents and traders from Thika). This raises the argument about who has the right to the city as explained by Lefebvre. Racaud (2018) notes that this are indeed rivalries of power for access to streets, private appropriation of public spaces, and streets as economic and political resources. The politicians on the other end take advantage of the pavement politics to utilize street vendors as their vote baskets (Kariuki 2022). On the same subject matter Mutengwa (2018), notes that electoral candidates make up yet another set of urban actors with an interest invested in the practice of crackdowns. While politicians seek to gain electoral support out of the management of crackdowns, their interests can still be understood within an exchange framework as extending a gift to street traders and expecting something in return. In this case, votes and not money are exchanged for the street traders’ chance to work.

## **4.8 Legal and policy Framework regulating informal trading in Kenya**

### **4.8.1 Constitution of Kenya 2010**

The promulgation of a new Kenyan Constitution in 2010 brought a devolution system of governance. The county governments would be getting 15% of the National budget, which, if put into good use concerning economic potential, will benefit the informal sector where street vendors are classified. According to Article 174, one of the devolution's objectives was to promote social and Economic development alongside accessible services throughout Kenya. The section ensures that there is equal distribution of local and national resources creating institutions and legislation that enhance development in a country.

Under article 43 (c), a person has a right to be free from hunger and have good-quality food. The government should allow anybody to participate in any genuine livelihood activity to ensure an adequate food supply. For street vendors, the right environment enables them to do their business without being harassed and earn their living. In the same article, Part (3), it says...The government shall provide suitable social security to all persons *unable to support themselves and their dependents*. The best way for the government to ensure that this right is provided is to allow people to engage in different livelihood activities that will guarantee to earn incomes.

Other articles in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, give the right for public participation. The informal trader is given some rights to participate in the public forum, especially regarding their livelihood activities. For example, Article 196(b) and Article 118 (b) note that the county assembly and parliament shall enhance public participation for all the assemblies and their committees. Article 69. (d) *The State shall encourage public participation in managing, protecting, and conserving the environment.* These articles give the informal trader, like any other Kenyan to participate in matters that affect his livelihood but unfortunately, most of the vendors are unaware of such rights.

In the fourth schedule under articles 185(2), 186(1), and 187(2), the constitution gives the county government some functions like trade development and regulation, including (a)markets and b) trade licenses-excluding professionals (c) fair trading practices (d)local tourism (e) cooperative societies.

Informal traders are always at the mercy of the regime; any new leadership in the county comes with its own rules and regulations concerning managing spaces in urban areas. The challenge becomes even greater if street vendors are not organized in their associations. For the County government to control trade development and regulation, this power can sometimes be abused if not taken well. If not well utilized, these powers can erode all the gains made in policy papers like vision 2030, which stands strongly in support of informal traders. The constitution of Kenya 2010 is supreme and identifies several rights for all Kenyans, including the marginalized, e.g., informal traders in this context

#### **4.8.2 Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill, 2019**

This bill of Parliament is meant to recognize and protect street vendors and their activities. It is a major step towards the formalization of street vending in Kenya. Murang'a Governor Hon initiated the bill. Mwangi wa Iria intends to regulate and allocate designated areas for the hawkers to operate. The governor, who is serving his second term, formulated the bill on its second reading at the senate and still awaits the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading before it is ready for the president to sign it so that it can become a law and, therefore, an act of parliament. While addressing



journalists on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Governor<sup>35</sup> Wa Iria was quoted in the local daily championing the rights of street vendors who have to be recognized as the legitimate traders

.....“They (hawkers) contribute over Sh3.6 trillion annually to our country’s economy. Still, they are treated as criminals, and it is time we stop criminalizing the informal sector,” Hawkers should be used as frontline marketers for locally produced products. They should be able to attend trade fairs. “County governments will have to give hawkers a 30-day notice before evicting them if a bill tabled in the Senate is passed. The new bill will establish the Hawkers and Street Vendors Authority to facilitate trade registration, regulation, and monitoring. Hawkers across the country will also be recognized as legitimate traders. He said that hawkers must be recognized as economic facilitators in Kenya, pointing out that in developed countries, hawking has been structured and has yielded success

#### **Murang’a Governor on championing the rights of street vendors on 7/3/2018**

The bill also aims at creating effective organizations for the hawkers with strict guidelines on areas of operations, ensuring that the vendors are formally recognized and designated in areas where customers can easily find them. If passed in its current form, the hawkers are to be allocated specific days and streets where they can operate<sup>36</sup>. The bill, under its memorandum of objects and reasons on page 139, states that

#### **MEMORANDUM OF OBJECTS AND REASONS**

##### **Statement of the Objects and Reasons for the Bill**

The principal object of this Bill is to provide a framework to regulate the business of street vending in the country. Small-scale trade contributes significantly to the growth of trade in the country. Currently, there is no legal framework governing street vending business, thus the challenges experienced by street vendors and county governments in undertaking the business. The trade regulation will therefore ensure that street vendors can transact business in favorable

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/Governor-Wa-Iria-champions-for-hawkers-rights/1107872-4332482-y6uoakz/index.html> -Accessed on 31/10/2019

<sup>36</sup> The Senate Hansard Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

conditions.

With its good intentions, the bill is still in the senate since it was drafted in 2018, meaning that the street vendors have to wait a little longer before a piece of legislation that gives them some formality comes into effect. Sometimes if the bill takes a long time, it may lose the very purpose it was intended to perform, especially because of the new developments witnessed in trade. It sometimes leaves some street vendors wondering if those traders in the formal economy have a hand in delaying the enactment of the bill or if it is just the normal bureaucracy in the senate. The formal traders worry that the legislation may allow “formalized competition” between what they sell and what the street vendors sell. Their argument has always been that they pay taxes, including the license and rent, whereas the street vendors pay none while selling the same products. The vendors’ products have occasionally traded at lower prices than those sold in the shops and more to customers who don’t mind the quality. In his paper “Cameroon and the transnational network of Chinese junk,” customers in developing countries like Kenya consider the price a major factor when purchasing goods. The same is noted by Racaud(2015) in his paper *“Cameroon and the transnational network of Chinese junk.”* The products sold by street vendors are very much available; they are cheap and are adapted to low-income populations, as noted by Racaud in villages of Mont Bamboutos (West Cameroon).

The bill proposes providing services such as security, parking areas, running water, and sanitary facilities such as toilets. Still, until then, the street vendors will continue to endure some of these challenges they encounter daily. In discussing<sup>37</sup> the bill, the senators observed that passing of the bill should be hastened because street vendors had endured hardships for a long and had been branded as criminals through harassment by the local authorities

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<sup>37</sup> The Senate Hansard 2/10/2019

#### **4.8.3 The Micro and Small Enterprises Act, 2012**

The Micro and Small Enterprises Act, 2012 was enacted on 31st December 2012 and commenced on the 4th of January. The act defines micro-enterprises as a firm, trade, service, industry, or business activity whose annual turnover does not exceed Kshs. 500,000 and whose total employees are less than 10 people. The act also defined a small enterprise with an annual turnover of Kshs. 0.5 - 5 million, with the number of employees in the range from 10-50 people (National Council for Law Reporting 2012). Kenya's MSMEs are a subset of the informal sector which is not only the major source of jobs but whose growth rate is much higher than any other wage sector. The sector is a key driver towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Kenya Vision 2030.

This act aims to promote the development of MSE and the micro and small enterprise authority, which would oversee the implementation and development of these small businesses. The government acknowledged the challenges presented by the persistence of the informal sector and worked to develop policies, regulations, and institutional frameworks to promote growth and mitigate the consequences of growing informality. The Act stipulates that national and county governments should recognize street vendors and informal traders (KCFLR 2012).

Section three of this Act expounds on the objectives to include the provision of an enabling business environment, inspiring an entrepreneurial culture, facilitating formalization, promoting representative organizations, and upgrading the informal Micro and Small Enterprises. The authority created under this act was mandated to oversee the Act's implementation. The Act also regulates the MSEs, such as the Application process, under the registrar's office. *Section 22 of the act provides for the inspection of accounts and the annual returns to the registrar.* These annual returns under section 24 ensure transparency and that the registrar can know when a business is liable to pay taxes. Currently, most traders in the informal sector do not pay taxes because of non-registration. There has been no proper mechanism to know whether these informal traders are to pay taxes and the expected amount to pay to the authorities. This Micro and Small Enterprises Act, 2012, was supposed to address this issue of registration and taxes to be settled.

Several mechanisms are in place for the smooth to ensure the workings of the MSE Act. One of the mechanisms is the creation of the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority, which was established under section 29 of the MSE Act<sup>47</sup>. This authority is mandated to formulate and Coordinate policies of the MSEs. In addition, his policy facilitates integrating and harmonizing various public and private sector initiatives to regulate the MSEs to become key Industries of Tomorrow. The second mechanism was to develop a Micro and Small Enterprises Fund under section 51. They provide affordable and accessible credit to micro and small enterprises through financing the capacity building of MSEs, research & development, innovation, and technology transfer (N.C.L.R 2012)<sup>38</sup>.

In Kenya, some legislation that affects Small businesses, like the MSE Act of 2012 and the Cities and Urban Areas Act of 2010, has been presented. Despite their enactment, little seems to have changed, as most Local authorities have not implemented these two legislations. These legislations were supposed to promote the development of informal commercial activities when fully implemented

#### **4.8.4 The Urban Areas and Cities Act, 2011**

The act applies to Thika as an urban area; it is also in line to become a city because of its population of 279,429. Urban Areas and Cities (Amendment) Bill, 2017 notes that approval of city status shall be subject to a raft of conditions that include a population of at least 250,000 people, the ability to provide services that include water and sanitation, street lighting, proper drainage systems, an effective public transport system, health services, ambulance services, and public cemeteries. A town aspiring for city status must also have a firefighting and disaster management system.

On the matter of informal activities, the act clearly outlines two issues. Under section 13 (2c), *a city board shall consist of not more than eleven members, six of whom shall be appointed through a competitive process by the county executive committee, with the approval of the county assembly*. The members referred to in this subsection are leaders of the informal sector who are

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<sup>38</sup> National Council for Law Reporting

supposed to represent informal traders though sometimes it may not be representative enough. The association is supposed to be at the forefront to represent matters affecting the informal sector, especially on how the city or municipality should support the street vendors

Secondly, under Objectives of integrated urban areas and city development planning section 36. (e) *Every city and municipality established under this Act shall operate within the framework of integrated development planning which shall nurture and promote the development of informal commercial activities in an orderly and sustainable manner*, which means that the Urban Areas and Cities Act of 2011 will impact street vending activities in the town.

#### **4.8.5 Environmental management and co-ordination act revised edition 2012**

An Act of Parliament establishes an appropriate legal and institutional framework for managing the environment and matters connected and incidental to that. For street vendors, this act of parliament impacts their activities, especially those selling food and those who have to attract customers by calling them in a loud voice, as is a norm in the street vending. *Article 87 on Prohibition against dangerous handling and disposal of wastes subsection (1) says, No person shall discharge or dispose of any wastes, whether generated within or outside Kenya, in such manner as to cause pollution to the environment or ill health to any person.* (Kenya National Council for Law Reporting 2012).

This article affects street vendors, especially those who use different types of wrappings for their products. Daily, littered pieces of paper and other wrappings will be disposed of everywhere on the streets, leaving the street vendors in trouble with the Sub-county environmental authorities. Disposing of food waste becomes an issue for those dealing with selling cooked food, as also captured in the public health Act, Chapter 242, 2012 of Kenya. The offender penalty is huge, as captured in article 87(5). *Any person who contravenes any provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offense amounting to a fine of not more than one million shillings or imprisonment and fine.* It becomes a contested area, especially between the implementers of this law and the street traders.

Another article, which affects street vendors' operation, is article 102. Noise above-established standards are prohibited. Subject to the provisions of the Civil Aviation Act (Cap. 394), any

person who emits noise above the noise emission standards established under this Part commits an offense. The nature of street vending involves calling customers loudly to capture their attention on what is being offered for sale. It results in an offense under this article and may be perceived as excess noise depending on who is making the judgment. Local authorities use these laws to clear the streets of informal traders.

#### **4.8.6 Policy framework guiding street vending**

Kenya Vision 2030 is the long-term development plan for the betterment of Kenyan society before the year 2030. It aims to transform Kenya into an industrial country capable of giving its citizens a high quality of life and a secure, clean environment. Preparing and discussing Vision 2030 with the public was undertaken between October 2006 and May 2007. The vision is organized around three pillars (1) economic aspirations – principally the maintenance of economic growth of 10% per annum, (2) social aspirations that prioritize ‘a just and cohesive society; and (3) political aspirations which aim to create an ‘....issue-based, people-centered results-oriented and accountable democratic political system’. (Linehan 2007). The informal sector is under the economic pillar's wholesale, retail, and international trade flagship projects. Specific areas captured in wholesale/retail trade include-

- (i) Build at least ten tier-one markets with a pilot project in Athi River, and construct whole and retail hawker's markets in selected urban areas;
- (ii) Establishment and strengthening of informal traders associations to form SACCOs for enhancing savings Mobilization to provide affordable finance and enhancement of management of the existing SACCOs
- (iii) Establish and operationalize forty-seven Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME) centers in all counties.

The Kenya vision 2030, as mentioned earlier, has focused on the informal sector as an alternative to creating employment in the country. It is a source of livelihood, especially for those not formally employed, and can be an incubator for those aiming to start industries. When the Vision is fully implemented, the issue of lack of credit for most of these traders will be solved as it aims to strengthen the informal associations into SACCOs, eventually graduating into fully-fledged banks. Construction of wholesale and retail hawker's markets

might solve the lack of vending sites for most street vendors and reduce the conflict between formally registered traders and street vendors (Moriango 2017).

## **4.9 Private Actors**

### **4.9.1 Street Vendors Associations**

There is a notion that informal traders are not organized, but the situation is quite different when one interacts with hawkers. Street vendor associations are significant actors in issues affecting informal traders in any country. These associations are known to handle issues such as members' welfare; resource mobilization and business support; moral support and social securities; giving technical advice; assisting members in locating and acquiring trading sites, and probably the major role being that of advocacy and protection of vendors against any form of harassment from the local authorities (Kinyanjui 2008).

These associations differ in formation, size, and focus, most drawing their membership from small producers and traders (McCormick et al. 2003). There are many informal traders' associations that are committed to improving the welfare of their members. A good example is a StreetNet network, a global alliance of street vendor organizations. Established in 2002, it has nearly 50 associations in various countries. In India, it is affiliated with Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and other organizations documented by Chen et al. (2002). StreetNet is also associated with KENASVIT, a national association of street vendors in Kenya with branches in 12 towns, including Thika (Racaud, 2015).

Globally street vendors' associations have had other successes in advocating for their members on different issues. The issues include Advocacy and lobbying for the Vendor's trading sites, Facilitating dialogue meetings with local authorities to address issues facing street traders, such as eviction and harassment of their members, and pushing for hawker-friendly laws, especially those that recognize the rights of street vending. A sample of these achievements by street vendors' associations has been in Africa and other continents globally, as indicated in Table 6. The examples here are from six countries, as summarized by Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

*Table 6 Success story of Street vendors associations*

<b>Country and City</b>	<b>The success story of Street vendors associations</b>
Peru, Lima in 2013	Street vendors worked with the city to create a new ordinance on street trade. Vendors and city officials met regularly to talk about the ordinance and to work together to make sure that the new rules took into account the needs and experiences of the street vendors
India, Ahmedabad in 2014	Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) built a strong street vendors' movement. They pressured the local government to create a committee (town vending committee) where they were able to have a voice in developing a street vending plan for the city, which defines clear areas for vending
Liberia , Monrovia 2018	Federation of Petty Traders and Informal Workers Union of Liberia (FEPTIWUL) signed a landmark MOU with the Monrovia Municipal Corporation (MCC) on 27 September 2018, after rounds of detailed negotiation. It was a major turning point in a decade-long struggle—and showed the power of strong informal organizations in making positive changes in urban areas.
Thailand, Chiang Rai	The city's two main street vending organizations have grown in membership. Through the group, they have successfully proposed and implemented new ideas with the city, like expanding a Saturday market to include one more day of the week.
Mexico, Mexico City, 2018	In April 2018, the Shoe Shiners Union of Mexico City and WIEGO filed a complaint at the city's Human Rights Commission about evading their members at Glorieta de Insurgentes Square park members. They were



	successful in getting the shoe shiners back to work.
South Africa, Durban/eThekweni municipality  2009 and 2014	An NGO working closely with street vendors (AeT), WIEGO, sued against the planned eviction of street vendors at Warwick Junction by building a Mall. The successful case limited the powers of Durban /eThekweni municipality to evict street vendors and confiscate their goods.

(Source: Wiego 2014)

In Kenya, most street vendor associations are small and focus on welfare issues. The issues include funerals, sickness, sometimes accompanying their members for dowry negotiations, and even assisting their members in paying school fees for their children. Most small associations cannot go beyond such issues because of capacity or lack of proper structures. Very few associations will address issues to do with the advocacy on rights of street vendors or even on street vending sites (Mitulla &Allila 2000)

The vendor associations in Kenya are divided into three categories, i.e., the National or umbrella associations, the regional organization, and the small associations whose main aim is to focus on welfare issues only. Some small associations exist as Merry-go round groups, while others are Rotating Savings and Credit Schemes (ROSCAs). Informal traders have used these associations to secure finances to mitigate against the usual risks that come with operating businesses, especially because most banks or insurance companies will shy off from financing their operations due to a lack of collateral

National or Umbrella associations in Kenya play multiple roles, such as providing services and clamoring for social justice, as well as being avenues for mobilizing social finance and regulating members' behavior. Umbrella associations are supported by; international partners, including War on Want, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), and Women in Informal Employment Globalizing Organizing (WIEGO). According to KENASVIT (2010), some of their main activities involve;-

- Advocacy and lobbying for the Vendor's trading sites; establishing a Micro-Credit scheme for Street vendors;
- Conducting peace and reconciliation activities;
- Capacity building for members in conflict resolution and management, negotiation skills, and Revolving Loan Fund Management;
- It facilitates dialogue meetings with local authorities to address street traders' issues.
- In addition, they conduct activities targeting further marginalized groups within their membership, including Street vendors with disabilities and women Street vendors.

In addition to KENASVIT, other trader's associations that exist in Kenya include NASEPA (Nairobi Informal Sector Service Provider Association), NISCO (National Informal Sector Coalition), PWDSTO (People with Disabilities Street Traders' Organization), WHAT (Wanainchi Hawkers and Traders Association), and Nairobi Hawkers Associations (NHA).

Kinyanjui's (2008) paper on *Social relations and associations in the informal sector in Kenya* observes that other associations by informal traders are found in the Jua kali sector. The associations are superimposed against other existing forms of social formations clusters. The wave of organizing the sector through forming groups, such as KENASVIT and NISCOF, disregarded the existing associations. Kinyanjui (2008) argues that sometimes these approaches have involved the creation of parallel organizations alongside already existing ones, with blatant disregard for any form of integration, resulting in problems for everyone involved. It brings apathy among the street vendors who are being represented as these associations cannot represent them.

#### **4.9.2 Trader's Associations in Thika**

Trader's associations in Thika have seen few people subscribing to them, especially those involved in the advocacy of street vending issues. Fieldwork conducted in Thika's CBD (between January and August 2020) with a sample of 57 street vendors shows only 21% have subscribed to these street vendor associations. These results are closer to what Kamunyori (2007) got in her studies in Nairobi CBD, where the estimate of street vendors is between 65,000-100,000. NISCOF's (street vendors association) membership is 15,000, representing

about 15%-23%. In Thika, the low membership was attributed to some vendors' perception that their businesses are not permanent; others thought it was too expensive to keep paying subscription fees while the benefits were not immediate. Some of them, like Mr. Jean<sup>39</sup>, a street vendor on a commercial street, say...

*I'm not in any associations because most of them are interested in only our subscription rather than service delivery.*

The same issue was noted by Mitullah (2000), who argues that some members of these associations lose interest due to the tension and suspicion in the group. It comes as a result of most associations not following the conventional methods of periodic elections of their leaders. Mitulla (*ibid*) emphasizes that some of these leaders continue to run the operations of the associations even in cases where there is no vision for the group. These leaders become less accountable and transparent, especially regarding the group's financial matters.

Few Traders' associations exist in Thika and include KENASVIT (Thika chapter), Thika Town hawker's welfare (as shown in photo12), and Thika District Business Association (TDBA). The three have been involved a lot in matters to do with negotiating with the sub-county government on the street vendor or trader's welfare in Thika town. A distinction must be made between these three associations as far as their operations are concerned. Thika District Business Association (TDBA) is mainly involved in the issues of formal business owners in Thika town, while the other two, i.e., KENASVIT and Thika Town Hawkers Welfare, deal with matters affecting street vendors within the Town.

Other groups exist purely welfare groups in specific areas; for example, there is the Stadium wall welfare association for those traders who sell along the Thika stadium perimeter wall; there is also a second-hand books sellers association made up of informal traders, the stadium wall. Welfare associations exist in formal markets such as Mukiriti, Jamhuri, and Makongeni. These formal market associations come together to provide moral support to one of their members in cases of sickness, losing a family member, or in other social events like weddings, graduation

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<sup>39</sup> interview conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> April at commercial street

ceremonies, and dowry payments. The small groups of street vendors have subscribed to bigger groups like KENASVIT or Thika Town hawker's welfare (TTHW). These two groups, therefore, work more like Umbrella associations. Other informal workers, such as Boda Boda and the Tuk Tuk operators, have formed associations to address their welfare issues. It can be confirmed by Mr.Amos,<sup>40</sup> a Tuk Tuk rider who says in Swahili....

*Sisi huwa na chama ya wenye Tuk-Tuk ambao huwa wanapanga karibu na Naivas supermarket mpaka hapo nje ya Cascade Hotel. Kila mwanachama lazima awe na Tuk-Tuk na alipe shilingi mia moja kila siku kwanzia jumatatu mpaka jumamosi.Kwa hivi sasa tuko wanachama arobaini.Mpango wetu ni kununua shamba<sup>41</sup> halafu tugawanyie kila mwanachama.*

We have an association of Tuk Tuk riders, especially those who carry passengers near Naivas supermarket up to Cascades Hotel. Every member must have a Tuk-Tuk and pay a subscription of Kshs.100/- per day from Monday to Saturday of every week. Currently, we are 40 members. We plan to buy a piece of land and then subdivide it among our members

Another motivation behind the formation of these associations is the availability of the women and youth Fund. This revolving fund mainly focused in 2002 when the third president of Kenya, Hon. Mwai Kibaki increased the kitty for women and youths. The aim was geared towards creating 500,000 jobs; therefore, the kitty started to create these jobs, especially in the informal sector. Since then, most informal workers or traders have come together to form groups or associations to benefit from this funding. The government and other financial institutions find it easier to fund traders who are already in a group, and then it can give to individuals using the Co-guaranteeing concept. This concept is borrowed from the Grameen bank model founded by Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh

Associations also exist as a requirement by the microfinance banks and SACCOs, especially for

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<sup>40</sup> interview with Amos the Tuk tuk rider on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

<sup>41</sup> This is a Swahili word meaning (a cultivated) plot, garden, land or field.

those who want to benefit from the credit. These associations must register with the social services department before being accepted by the banks as part of their clients. Most small enterprises, including street vendors, have come together to benefit as individual traders and groups through this arrangement.

#### **4.9.2.1 Thika Town Hawker's Welfare Association**

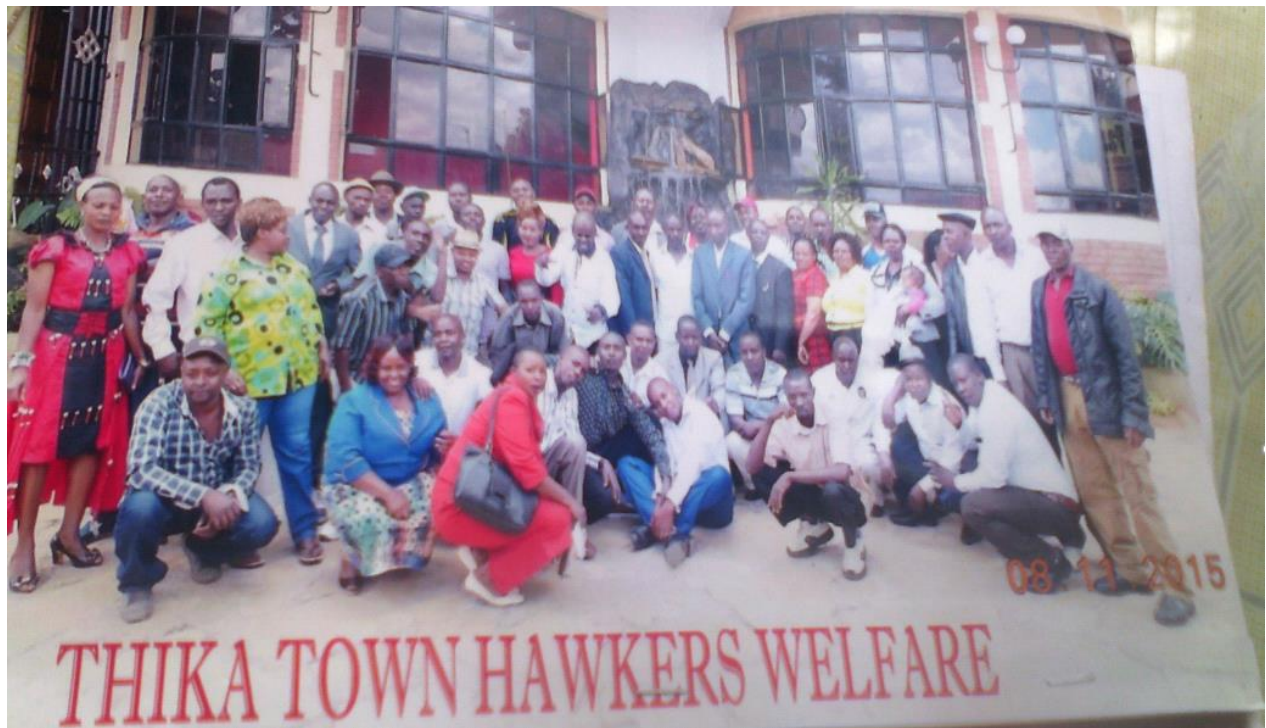
It is one of the most vibrant hawkers' association groups in Thika, with an inspiring story of how street vendors can organize themselves in welfare issues and then grow into powerful associations that can advocate for the rights of their members, especially on vending sites. The group has gone beyond normal welfare issues and tries to secure the future of its members by getting into real estate to enable them to earn even when the time for retirement comes and leave the streets.

While the Association has started the project to secure its members' future, it has also been able to advocate for the rights of some members who did not have a vending site to undertake their business. According to Mr. Duncan<sup>42</sup>, the chairperson of Stadium hawker's group (an affiliate of Thika Town hawkers association), they have successfully negotiated for two sites for their members within the CBD. The first one is along the Thika stadium wall with 80 vendors where he is located, and the second one is along the Mama-Ngina Garden, where there are 60 street vendors. Their third project was to have about 250 other members resettled at Mama-Ngina Garden near the Hindu temple. Still, it did not materialize since politics infiltrated the whole project, and the Governor had to shelve the whole idea. The opposition to relocating traders to Mama-Ngina Garden was due to resistance from the Mukiriti market traders. There was a perception among the Mukiriti traders that a new market for street vendors in the CBD would create stiff competition, forcing all the customers to move to the new market.

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<sup>42</sup> interview on 18/1/2020

*Photo 12 Thika Town Hawker's Welfare Association*



(Source: Author 2019)

These two scenarios show street vendor associations' power in checking welfare issues and advocacy. As Lund and Skinner (1990) further argue, where street traders are not organized, it may be difficult to pressure local government, and resources are unlikely to be allocated. Thika Town Hawkers Welfare, on their part, has been exerting pressure on behalf of their members and ensuring continuity with their business activities without interruption.

The activities and exploits of this association have attracted politicians who want to be associated with it for their benefit. The current M.P for Thika Town visited the building project being constructed by the association and promised to support them in their efforts to complete the construction. The group also seems to have caught the eye of the County Governor and the Member of the County Assembly, as both supported the allocation of these group members at the Mama-Ngina Garden in 2019. The good relationship with the politicians allowed their members to undertake business in Thika town uninterrupted. The association is included in some decision-making when the business community and the county authorities discuss issues concerning Thika town. Mitulla & Alila (2000) argues that if street vendors are to be provided with trading sites,

their associations must be aggressive in lobbying policymakers, planners, and administrators. It might lead to their operations recognition and inclusion in urban planning and management.

The efforts of the Thika hawker's welfare association show how street vendors considered informal can collaborate with formal associations and bring about development in terms of real estate and advocacy to their members.

*Box 2: From street to Real estate owners*

Thika Town Hawkers Welfare was formed in 2010 as a self-help group though later, they incorporated the investment aspect in their operations. At its inception, each member was obligated to make a monthly contribution of Ksh.500/= (3.8 Euros). The idea of forming the group came up when one of their friend and hawker lost a brother, and the burial was to take place in Nakuru<sup>43</sup>. They had to move up and down, trying to raise funds for the burial expenses from other hawkers. According to Chairman Joseph Muiruri Kimuti, it took them a lot of time to finally raise enough money to meet the cost of transporting the deceased's body to Nakuru and cater for the other expenses.

The idea of starting a group was mooted amid all these efforts to raise money. As said earlier, each member was supposed to contribute at least Kshs 500/- per month. Other welfare issues that the association included assisting a member in dowry negotiation with his in-laws. From this, the group thought of adding the investment aspect to their activities. The group chairman also says that the tribulations experienced as hawkers made them realize that they might end up retiring from the trade with nothing to show after years of "being chased by county government officers." When the investment was included as part of their objective, monthly contributions had to be increased from 500/- to 1,600/-. This increase saw membership drop from an initial 53 to the current 43. The exiting members cited high monthly contributions as the main reason.

Among the investment options floated by the members was venturing into the transport industry by operating Matatus, Tuk Tuks, or motorbikes. After much deliberation, the group found out that the transport sector was too troublesome and divisive and would kill their objectives of

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<sup>43</sup> Nakuru-A town located South East of the capital Nairobi and approximately 160km apart

improving their social status. The group finally opted to venture into real estate and bought their first piece of land in Kangangu<sup>44</sup>, in Murang'a County, for sh. 150,000(1,154 Euros)

After a decision to invest in the real estate, the group purchased another plot measuring 50 by 100 meters in Kiganjo Estate in Thika at Sh1 million (7,690 Euros) from the members' contribution. This purchase exhausted all their savings while money was needed for the construction project in their newly acquired plot. The group continued saving their contributions for the next three years while approaching various financial providers. The group eventually secured a loan with Unaitas Sacco Society Limited (a financial institution), who gave them an initial loan of Sh3.6 million (27,692 Euros) for financing their construction project. Before receiving the loan, the group was advised by the financiers to change the status of their group from a Self-Help group to a Limited company to benefit from bigger loans in the future. Most financial institutions shy off from dealing with Self-Help groups because of being seen as unstable and risky to lend huge amounts of money. To date, the group's name changed from Thika Town Hawkers Welfare to Thika Town Vendors Limited Company.

The group later secured another 6 million (46,154 Euros) loan that was eventually utilized to complete the ground floor of the planned 4-story flat, which will be 1-bedroom and bedsitters (studio) houses. The projected returns for the ground floor are Kshs.100 000/-(769Euros) The group plans to use to service their monthly loan.

The success of this venture has attracted politicians and other stakeholders who would want to replicate the same success story. One such politician is the area Member of Parliament, who even visited the site and promised to give them Kshs. 1 million and assist them with a loan guarantee of up to Kshs. 1 million (7,692 Euros) whenever they need the money.

(Source: Field notes)

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<sup>44</sup> Kangangu-A town in Murang'a County a distance of 85km south west of the capital Nairobi



### **Challenges of Thika Town Hawker's Welfare Association**

Like any other group, Thika Town Hawker's Welfare Association (TTHW) has faced its share of difficulties, the most significant of which was the expulsion of some of its members. This dismissal occurred as a result of a pattern of absenteeism from group sessions, while others occurred as a result of missed payments for the monthly membership. Conflict with "foreign" traders who come from neighboring towns and take over Thika's space, creating rivalry, has been another difficulty. These purported "foreign" traders are from the cities of Murang'a, Githurai, Ruiru, and Githurai. The chairperson also emphasized problems with members who are selling used textbooks. Because the majority of the previous books in their stock are no longer useful in the new curriculum, some of these members ran at a loss. The Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) 2-6-6-3 is actually replacing the 8-4-4 as the primary educational curriculum in Kenya. New textbooks are consequently needed, and used book sellers find it challenging to keep up with these developments. Additionally, the government presently offers all public secondary schools free textbooks for the whole four years of study. The market share of street sellers selling used textbooks was significantly reduced as a result. Now that public secondary schools typically have much more pupils than private secondary schools, street sellers are restricted to only selling textbooks to those institutions. The same reform is aimed at primary schools, pushing book sellers on the street to choose another line of work. In the aforementioned situations, it would appear that the groups for street sellers have no power to defend their members from curriculum revisions and government initiatives to provide students with free textbooks.

#### **4.9.2.2 KENASVIT**

The second street vendors association that is actively involved with informal traders is the KENASVIT (Thika Chapter). The association was started through research conducted between 1998 and 2000 by the IDS (Institute for Development Studies) on women and street vendors in Kenya (Alila and Mitulla 2000). The organization was launched on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and had its head offices in Nakuru Town. According to their constitution enacted in 2006, the vision of KENASVIT is to transform street vending and informal businesses into corporate

establishments. The mission is to organize and empower street vendors and informal traders, to improve their businesses through training, access to credit, and dialogue with local authorities and other relevant organizations on appropriate by-laws and policies that give recognition to, and bring to end harassment and discrimination. Having KENASVIT as an umbrella body with branches all over the country, including Thika, shows its importance at the National and local scale, as noted by Lindel (2010) and Mitullah(2011).

The KENASVIT-Thika chapter came up with a system of registration of their members and identification like a badge. It was meant to safeguard their member's in-case of crackdowns from County council askaris. A member had to produce his membership badge and pay a certain amount to the Finance department daily, but unfortunately, the County did not agree to these arrangements. The association has nine subgroups located in different parts of Thika town, for example, one at Moi market, another group located along the stadium wall, and another group located in Kiandutu<sup>45</sup>, among others. The group's membership has been over 300 since its inception in Thika town.

Apart from lobbying and fighting for the rights of street vendors in Thika town, KENASVIT normally holds training for its members on areas such as negotiating skills. The group has a unit that addresses issues concerning HIV and AIDS to their members to ensure good health. The group was also involved in resisting vehemently to the invasion by "foreign" traders in Mama-Ngina Garden.

#### **4.9.2.3 Thika District Business Association (TDBA)**

Thika District Business Association (TDBA) is a membership-based organization launched on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013. According to their website<sup>46</sup>, the association's vision is to be the leading institution in advising, coordinating, and facilitating the implementation of a smooth, sound, and favourable business environment in Thika, Kiambu County, and beyond. Their mission is to

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<sup>45</sup> Kiandutu is arguably one of the largest slums outside Nairobi. It sits on approximately 100 acre land in the outskirts of Thika town with a population of slightly over 30,000 residents

<sup>46</sup> [www.tdba.or.ke](http://www.tdba.or.ke)

create, nurture, advocate and sustain a conducive environment for local and international business, ensure efficient delivery of services by the county and national governments, and promote consensus building through dialogue among stakeholders to monitor and fast-track the social-economic development of the county.

TDBA normally seek an audience with the government and the private sector on issues affecting members running their businesses in Thika. Like other associations, Thika District Business Association (TDBA) represents the interests of the local businesses, claiming their legitimacy as private actors and influencing street vending activities. Just as Morange (2015) notes, when analyzing the displacement of street vendors in Nairobi's CBD, she details how a private actor, Nairobi City Business District Association (NCBDA), is involved in securing the relocation of vendors. Like their counterparts in Nairobi (NCBDA), TDBA has occasionally gotten an audience with the County government and advocated for a clean city devoid of Street vendors. This attempt of a private organization to organize public space has not only been observed in Nairobi and Thika but also in Mumbai (India), as noted by Salès (2016) and Chatterji & Roy (2016). The association has supported the county government in cleaning the city by expelling street vendors. A good example is a statement by their chairperson during a meeting with the County Government

### Box 3 Formal Traders association on street vendors

*“All hawkers trading within Thika have been given up to Sunday, 17th of February 2019, to vacate the streets of Thika’s CBD or face the full wrath of the law. It was agreed that these vendors would only be allowed on the streets at 7 pm when the formal businesses close shop. During the day, any hawker operating within the CBD will be arrested and charged in court. Thika hawkers have been allocated some space along the stadium wall where they will operate during the day,”* said the chairperson. Plans are underway to create a *database of all hawkers operating within Thika to keep track of all those doing genuine business and ensure order and security to public members during their hours of operation. A similar fate awaits the fruit vendors who also have until Sunday to wheel their Mikokoteni off the streets within the CBD.* (TDBA) chairperson Alfred Wanyoike <sup>47</sup> during the Thika Business Open Forum on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019

The vice chairperson of TDBA, a shopkeeper in Thika town, emphasizes that TBDA deals more with advocacy rather than welfare and that the association has experts that can assist in solving the street vendor’s problem. The vice chairperson<sup>48</sup> narrates how the invasion of street vendors has created many problems in the town.

*...First, street vending has increased insecurity within the streets of Thika town. Most thieves pretend to be customers taking advantage of the large numbers of street vendors, forcing most shopkeepers to close early. Secondly, the invasion of street vendors is killing the town's economy in many ways. The County government is not benefiting in any way because the street vendors are not paying any taxes, unlike most shopkeepers who pay taxes. The stiff competition from these street vendors forces formal enterprises out of their business and, therefore, cannot continue paying taxes to the sub-county government. Lastly, our town also looks dirty because the street vendors dump waste everywhere. There is no order*

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.thikatowntoday.co.ke> /2019/02 /no-daytime-hawking-starting-this-sunday.html Accessed on Open Forum on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 30/10/2019

<sup>48</sup> Interview conducted on 23/12/19

*on how the dumping is supposed to be done. Nowadays, the town looks so disorganized and congested with street vendors selling their goods all over the pavements and in any available space.*

In pursuit of advocating for their members, TDBA has been demanding a fair game where all traders benefit, and some suffer at the expense of street vendors. The association insists that the 6 pm time given for the vendors to operate is a time gap measure awaiting the County Government to construct a hawkers market. The construction of the hawker's market means clearing the streets to allow customers to access the formal enterprises. TDBA insists that most vendors are from outside Thika and makeup 90% of all street vendors. The group insinuates that even the "old" hawkers from Thika are always against the new wave of hawkers in the CBD. The blame game is pointed towards the political leadership of the county and planning department in the sub-county for failing to involve other stakeholders in the decision-making

Despite this observation, TDBA believes that if well managed, the street vendors can graduate to own enterprises in Thika town. According to the association's record, approximately 10-30% of their members in Thika town were once street vendors and, coincidentally, are among the most successful ones. The association has not always been against street trading in the evening because it is also a way of earning their livelihood rather than engaging in criminal activities. Street vendors are also very important as distributing agents of goods as formal traders use them to dispense several products. According to the chairperson<sup>49</sup> of TBDA.....

*We are still pushing a plan to fence Mama-Ngina Garden and provide stalls with canopies to the street vendors. The same place was to be allocated in 2017, but the plan was shelved due to politics by hawkers from the Mukiriti market. Some well-wishers, like the Hindu community, are ready to sponsor the project and put a perimeter wall around the Garden. It will distinguish between hawkers from Thika and those from other towns.*

The association's chairperson confirmed the presence of college students undertaking hawking as

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Chairperson of TDBA

their part-time activity. TDBA organized a meeting with the student council of Mount Kenya University to discuss the issue of students trading in the streets of Thika. The TDBA agreed with the student body to allow them to undertake business but only along General Kago road, which is along Mount Kenya University

#### **4.9.3 Supermarkets**

Several supermarkets in Thika include Kassmatt, Twiga Mart, Naivas, Tuskys Chap Chap, Society Stores, Quick-mart, Maathai, and Maguna Andu. For the sake of this research, four supermarkets were picked because of being located along Commercial Street, the main area where the research was conducted. The supermarkets include Kassmat, Twiga Mart, Naivas, and Society Stores. The researcher did not manage to interview the managers of Naivas supermarket because of the long procedure of applying and waiting for the response from the head office. The other three were fairly accessible because their headquarters are located in Thika. From the managers' interviews in the three supermarkets, common issues affect them, especially their relationship with street vendors.

The challenge facing supermarkets is the blockage of their entries by street vendors. The partial blocking of entries brings congestion, attracting petty thieves like pickpockets and, in some cases, stealing from customers intending to buy goods in their supermarkets. Sometimes the congestion at the entry may make customers change their minds about getting into the supermarket.

The three supermarkets acknowledged minimal competition with the street vendors and thus did not pose any challenge to them. However, some of the products sold by street vendors are similar to those in the supermarket, the latter boast of selling high-quality products. Unlike street vendors who are not permanent in a given location, the supermarket also offers a guarantee. Therefore when a customer has to return spoilt goods, they might not get the street vendor, unlike when doing the same in a supermarket. The only other challenge is that if their customers buy a lot from street vendors, it may reduce the amount of money that was to be spent in the supermarket.

The managers of the four supermarkets selected also agree that the presence of street vendors in the CBD is better than having the youths engage in crime. Lack of employment opportunities has pushed hawkers to the streets, a similar scenario in all parts of the country. The recommendation is for the sub-county government of Thika to have permanent stalls for street vendors to allow access to customers whose traffic is mainly found around the CBD. The county government should improve the security of the streets by ensuring street lighting. It will enable the street vendors to extend their working time up to midnight, allowing a 24-hour economic model for the town and the local authority to collect some taxes.

The Kassmat supermarket manager<sup>50</sup> had the following remarks on Thika Sub-County authorities' ...

*I fully blame the politicians in this town who have not allowed the sub-county county enforcement team to do their work. The politicians reward the street vendors (for voting for them in the last elections) by allowing them to trade without many restrictions freely. These problems are compounded by the county council police, which is not paid and therefore forced to extort bribes from the street vendors to allow them to continue trading. Some (county police) will even communicate to them if a major operation is to be undertaken so that they can hide before the police can apprehend them. From these experiences, we, as the supermarket, cannot force the street vendors out of pavements around our supermarkets because they are “protected” by politicians.*

To counter the increase of street vendors outside their supermarket, Kassmat occasionally displays their goods on the verandah, as shown in photo 37. The supermarket has been forced to utilize its verandah space because of the number of street vendors thronging on it every evening for the past few years. Other supermarkets have also tried to put security guards outside to clear the ever-increasing street vendors. Still, the efforts have been in vain, as the number of hawkers has been overwhelming.

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<sup>50</sup> Interview on 15/04/2020

On the other hand, the Manager<sup>51</sup> at Society stores commented on the identity of street vendors in Thika and the reasons that force street vendors to flow into the streets of this town.

*I find no problem when hawkers come into the street if they are well organized. Most street vendors come from outside Thika, especially Murang'a County. Thika is "owned" and developed more by the Murang'a people than by Kiambu. It means that most people who come to do business in Thika are from Murang'a. Just see how the main stage is deserted because of the covid-19 lockdown, as most are business people from Murang'a. Thika town is a node where traders and customers from outside Thika congregate to do business.*

The manager defends hawkers' presence in Thika's streets as he explains that Jamhuri and Mukiriti markets are already "full" as prime areas have already been taken. The remaining areas are not competitive enough to make any profit. Some of the street vendors buy foodstuffs from the same supermarkets. According to the Society stores' manager, street vendors also like advertising agents to the supermarkets to attract customers near their shops. Finally, they can buy items in the supermarket.

#### **4.9.4 Financial institutions**

As Thika experiences an increase in urbanization, several banks have moved into the town to take advantage of the increase in population. There are approximately 17 banks in the town, which include Absa Bank Ltd, Equity Bank, Co-operative Bank, Bank of Africa, SBM Bank, Consolidated Bank, Family Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank Ltd, Housing Finance Co. Ltd, Kenya Commercial Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Stanbic Bank, Diamond Trust Bank, Ecobank Kenya Ltd, Sidian Bank, Faulu Bank and Bank of Baroda. Apart from commercial banks, there are several Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) which include Kenya Women Financial Trust (KWFT), Jamii Bora; Unaitas, Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF), Small and Micro Enterprises Programme (SMEP), Vision Fund and Thika Community Development Trust (TCDT).

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<sup>51</sup> Interview conducted at Society Stores on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020



Due to the vibrancy of the informal sector in Thika, most banks have targeted small enterprises, especially those run by street vendors. Faulu bank is one of the financial institutions targeting informal traders, especially those organized in associations like a self-help groups. Theresa<sup>52</sup>, a credit officer with the bank, explains ....

*The bank has several products targeted at street vendors whose numbers are increasing daily. The products include Faulu Chama loan, Faulu Micro-loan, and group business loan. The most popular one is the Faulu Chama loan since it targets formal and informal groups such as investment clubs, merry-go-rounds, and welfare groups operating a Faulu Chama account. While most street vendors have realized the benefits of being in groups, these loans (Faulu Chama loans) offer affordable rates and flexible repayment periods, and members can access individual loans.*

Faulu bank came to Thika like any other financial institution due to the increase in small and medium enterprises. The surrounding hinterlands, rich in agriculture, sell their goods in Thika town, increasing its vibrancy. The credit officer further explains why the bank chose to come to Thika, unlike going to other nearby towns...

*The bank chose to come to Thika because it was a vibrant town among the other surrounding towns. Some of the evening street vendors come from Nairobi and its environs in the afternoon and leave at night around 9 pm. While some of these vendors have their accounts in our Nairobi branches, deposits are made in our Thika Branch, especially in the evening. We have noted an increase in customers, especially in the late afternoon, coming to withdraw or make deposits since 2016.*

Like any other bank, for traders to secure loans, one has to have collateral or be guaranteed by other group members. This concept of co-guaranteeing is borrowed from Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which Mohammed Yunus pioneered. Therefore for street vendors to secure a loan with some of the microfinance banks or Sacco's, one has to belong to a group and at least show

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<sup>52</sup> interview on 2/6/2020

his area of operation, which has to be permanent. Some of these vendors have stalls at the Moi market to procure loans with Faulu Bank. What most of them have done to secure loans is to get a temporary stall at Moi Market (as collateral) but operate mostly in the streets. The vendors come to the streets in the evening to sell their goods because it is at this time that most of their customers are coming from Nairobi or are leaving their workplaces in Thika town to head home. The credit officer is quick to point out that a large group of college students are street vendors, but it is tricky to give loans to the students because most of their lifestyle does not allow them to save.

Unaitas Sacco Society Limited is another financial institution that has invested in the informal sector in Thika. Currently, the bank is financing Thika Town vendors Limited with a loan of almost Ksh.9.6 million (or 74,922.59Euros) to construct a 4-story flat with a ground floor completed, as shown in photo13. The flat rental consists of 1-bedroom houses and, once complete, can earn the street vendors' group a total of Kshs.400, 000(3,076.9Euros) per month once completed. The initial loan given to the group was Ksh.3.6 million (28,095.97 Euros) for the construction of the foundation and an additional Ksh.6 million for the ground floor and first floor. These loans given to street vendors and associations show the financial institutions' confidence in these informal traders.

#### **4.9.5 Transporters**

From the interview with street vendors in the streets of Thika, 80% use public means to transport their goods to the streets. The remaining 20% deal with agricultural products and are forced to carry their goods using hired pick-ups or Lorries. Within the CBD, the vendors walk or sometimes use Tuk-tuk, especially when carrying a heavier load. Some vendors use Tuk-tuks to pick up their merchandise from warehouses within Thika to their preferred street, especially Commercial Street. Traders who deal with perishable agricultural products store them in their homes and therefore are picked from their homes by Tuktuks or Bodaboda every evening

*Photo 13 Flat belonging to Thika Town vendor's ltd financed by Unitas Sacco*



(Source: Author 2020)

Amos, a Tuk-tuk rider in Thika since 2015, also transports vendors selling agricultural products from their homes because most live around the town. Most of the vendors dealing with fruits lock them up in their Mikokoteni (Handcarts) under the watchful eye of a night guard. Some of these night guards' main duties are to take care of some shops at night and are also temporarily hired by street vendors who sell near the shop. The street vendors who cannot hire a night guard are forced to carry their goods home to store them well because of the perishability nature of their goods. One of the Tuktuk riders - Amos,<sup>53</sup> explains how he came to Thika and how street vending in Town has evolved...

*Ninatoka Kenol kaunti ya Murang'a na hisia zangu kuhusu wachuuzi wa barabarani ni kwamba lazima uhuru wa kufanya biashara zao. Mamlaka ya*

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<sup>53</sup> Interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020

*kaunti inaweza kufunga barabara moja ili kuwaruhusu wachuuzi kuendelea kufanya biashara zao. Uvamizi wa wachuuzi wa barabarani hapa Thika ulianza mnamo mwaka wa 2017 kwa sababu maisha katika mji huu ni ya bei rahisi kwani mtu anaweza kupata nyumba ya bei rahisi kwa shilingi elfu moja na mia tano. Ingawa mazingira ya kisiasa mnamo 2017 yanaweza kuwa sababu, lakini naamini sababu kuu ambayo ilileta watu wengi mjini Thika ni gharama ya chini ya maisha.*

I come from Kenol in Murang'a County, and I feel that street vendors must be left alone to do their business. The county authority can close one street to allow the vendors to continue doing their business. Thika's invasion of street vendors started in 2017 because life in this town is cheaper, as one can get a cheaper house for as low as Kshs.1,500/-. Though the political environment in 2017 might have been a factor, I believe the major factor that brought many people to Thika was the low cost of living.

Amos believes that the congestion in Thika is not because of the street vendors; rather, it is the disorganization brought about by Matatus, Bicycles, Motorcycles, and Tuk-Tuks. This means of transport pick up passengers from anywhere and park at any point because of the lack of designated areas. There are more than 1,000 Tuk-tuks in town, and starting in January 2020, the sub-county government organized them in terms of streets. A directive by the Sub-County Government of Thika that became effective 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020 organized all Tuk-tuks from the following zones: -

- a) Thika's main stage
- b) Along Temple Road (near Mosque)
- c) Kang'oki (Moi Garden) - along General Kago Road
- d) Section 9 - (old zone)

**Picking Points within the CBD:**

- 1) Along Kenyatta Highway opposite Dr. Wachira Hospital (3 reserved parking slots)
- 2) Along Commercial Street adjacent to Standview Apartments opposite Rafiki Micro-Finance Bank (2 reserved parking slots)

- 3) Along Uhuru Street adjacent to Tuskys Chap Chap entrance (2 reserved parking slots)
- 4) Along mama Ngina Drive (East) adjacent to Victory Plaza (Max. 5 tuk-tuks)
- 5) Along Commercial Street adjacent to Naivas Supermarket (Max. 3 tuk-tuks)
- 6) Along Kenyatta Highway adjacent to Express Auto Spares (2 reserved parking slots)
- 7) Along Kwame Nkrumah Street adjacent to Grace House (2 reserved parking slots)

Amos operates his Tuk-tuk within Commercial Street adjacent to Naivas supermarket. He operates early in the morning and late in the evening. At the same time, during the midmorning, he does some deliveries on behalf of Jumia (an online Company) between Thika, Kenol, and Juja.

The other transporters popular with the street vendors are the matatus and buses. The buses are commonly used, especially when transporting bulky goods from Nairobi. The most common ones in Thika are Kenya Mpya, Neo-Kenya, Lothian, Lophat travelers, and Chania buses. All buses have their terminus at Thika Main stage, while the Nissan Matatus have several terminuses, especially along the commercial street. An interview with a driver and a conductor of Kenya Mpya confirms that the movement of people during the campaign period to the 2017 general election was quite high. The drivers and the conductors could not tell whether the movement was due to street vendors migrating for trading or politicians moving with their supporters to Thika town. Passenger Service Vehicles (P.S.V) drivers argue that the buses and Nissan Matatus have a specific carrying capacity and, therefore hard to determine an increase in passenger movements. The only change has been the increase in Matatu and buses plying on Thika Superhighway, which recorded an upward trend, as the drivers and conductors admitted.

#### **4.9.6 Thika residents/Dwellers and Customers**

Thika town, as mentioned earlier, has a population of about 279,429, according to the 2019 national census. According to Thika municipality spatial plan (2018), the town is the largest urban area in Kiambu County owing to its diverse industrial, educational, and residential functions. Thika is a prominent industrial zone in Kiambu County that covers an area of 217.6 km<sup>2</sup>; this gives it a rough estimate of a population density of about 1,284 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Thika being in Kiambu County is considered the “dormitory of Nairobi city.” It means that the

population of Thika town is quite high in the evening as commuters leave their workplaces in Nairobi headed home. According to Kinyanjui (2013), Thika registers high rates of the mobile population of migrant workers and daily commuters who work in town and go back to their homes after work.

The increase in street vending in Thika, especially in the evening, has impacted the residents of Thika. In this research, 28 residents from Thika were purposively selected. The criterion was based on the number of years one has lived in the town and in this context, those who have lived for more than eight years. Most interview questions were based on their attitudes towards street vendors' influx in the town.

Most residents agreed that the intensive street vending started during the 2017 general elections, especially in the evening. The residents attributed this invasion of street vendors to the hotly contested elections that allowed the street vendors to undertake their trade uninterrupted. The residents were aware that most of the vendors selling in the streets were not from Thika but from neighboring towns like Githurai, Murang'a, Kandara, Ruiru, Juja, and Nairobi, amongst others.

The residents were also aware that college students from the institutions of higher learning within and around Thika have not only provided a market for street vendors but are also doing vending. There are examples of bustling businesses around Mount Kenya University and Thika technical training institute along General Kago road the two are located. The same students extend the business to the streets of Thika in the evening. The expansion of Mount Kenya University from just a college to a fully-fledged university seems to have brought in more students to Thika town, and the students have turned to informal trading to get income for upkeep.

During the interviews, the residents empathized with street vendors because, to some, a lack of employment pushes them to the streets. The current tight economic situation in the country has led to people losing their jobs, and most university graduates are not assured of any jobs. Some residents preferred to have hawkers eking out a living in the streets rather than terrorizing them as thieves in the streets.

There is a varied opinion among the residents on the pro and cons of the street vendors in Thika town. One of the residents, Mr.Kamau, who lives near Munene industry, about 2.5 km from Thika town, summarized some advantages of street vendors.

*The hawkers who come to Thika every evening have helped us in various ways...they sell their goods very cheaply. There is also room for negotiation and bargaining; therefore, prices of goods are not fixed, making them affordable in these tough economic times. I have always been able to buy very cheap vegetables in the streets compared to what I get in the market. Most vegetables are of good quality because they are fresh from Gatanga or sometimes from Makongeni market. I also find them convenient because I do not have to travel to Mukiriti or Jamhuri market to get them, especially in the evening. After all, the market is closed by 7 pm when I return home. The majority of Shops in Thika town are already closed by that time.*

For Ms. Eda, who lives in section 9 and has been in Thika town for nearly 14 years, the product's uniqueness makes her purchase from street vendors. Most of the clothes sold by street vendors are in fashion and unique such that one cannot find the same in the local boutiques. It is the variety of products displayed by street vendors that make them competitive. Ms.Eda is relieved by the convenience brought about by street vendors because one needs not go to Nairobi, the capital, to get the goods. The Hawkers make the streets vibrant, even for some inconspicuous places lying idle in town. Some street vendors have made Thika town their new home, having moved from other towns; a good example is Mr. Bidan (a hawker selling blouses), who used to live in Kandara town in Murang'a County. It is such a trend of these hawkers moving to Thika that it is exciting for Landlords who have rental houses in Thika. Mr.Gitau<sup>54</sup>, a landlord, living in Makongeni, commented and said...

*Street vending has advantages because most of these traders eventually move and stay in Thika town, ensuring landlords can get tenants. It increases the landlord's income, who can pay rental taxes to the government, and expands by increasing*

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<sup>54</sup> interviewed on 17/4/2020

*the number of rental houses. Unlike in the past, we have our houses full of tenants, mostly informal traders in the jua kali sector in Thika Town. The rental housing business lost demand, especially after the collapse of the majority of the industries in the town. Still, things changed recently when universities came, and small businesses are coming up again.*

However, while some positive comments about street vending in Thika, residents raise equally negative issues. Some of the residents criticized the management of the urban spaces in the town. According to the residents, the county council did not do enough to curb the influx of the large numbers of street vendors coming from other towns. One such resident, Sarah<sup>55</sup>, who has been living in Thika since 2008, says ...

*I remember our town was organized before the county governments were inaugurated in 2013 and even during our first governor's regime. All the street vendors had been cleared off the streets and taken to Mukiriti market. Since the new regime took over in 2017, the running of our County and, by extension, Thika town, street vendors are everywhere, especially in the evening. The sub-county officials seem to be sleeping on their job. This situation has increased crime rates within the CBD, with pickpockets taking advantage of the congestion. Can you imagine the vendors displaying their products even in front of the banks in the evening? I cannot withdraw my money at Family Bank ATM because street vendors surround the entry point of the cash booth. I, therefore, prefer to withdraw my money from the banking hall rather than the ATM.*

Photo 14 shows several street vendors displaying and selling their products near the Family Bank ATM. To some residents, street vending is an outlet for contraband goods or fake products. The influx of street vendors ushered in pollution (solid waste and noise), insecurity, congestion (both vehicles and human traffic), illicit drug sales, prostitution, and the eternal traffic jam, especially along Commercial Street. The selling of cooked food on the streets also drew some criticism as some felt it was a health hazard as most of it is prepared under open and unhygienic conditions.

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<sup>55</sup> interview on 21/4/2020



The safety of street food vendors (SFVs) has also come under sharp criticism, according to Mwove et al. (2020), who researched food safety sold by street vendors in Kiambu County. One selected area was Thika town CBD and around Thika level-5 hospital. In their findings, 86.1% of all SFVs handled food with bare hands and money and food simultaneously without washing hands after the vendors handled money while serving food without washing hands. In another finding, almost all the vendors (98.6%) selling around dirty environments had vending structures with poor hygiene and sanitary status

Ms. Faith<sup>56</sup>, a resident of Pilot estate in Thika

*It is a shame it has become a nuisance because our government failed to ensure there are jobs as promised. Nonetheless, something needs to be urgently done because the county government is losing a lot of revenue. The street vendors do not pay licenses and have caused many to close down their businesses because of unfair competition.*

According to Faith, an ideal town should have proper infrastructural planning (buildings, roads, walking paths, and other structures like markets and designated bus parks. It will also mean good trading stalls for street vendors. Vendors' trading sites are properly allocated, cleanliness maintained, and security of pedestrians and vendors at any time of the day or evening.

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<sup>56</sup> Interview on 23/4/2020

*Photo 14 A vendor displaying products in front of Family Bank*



(Source: Author2020)

#### **4.10 Summary of the chapter**

The chapter focuses on street vendors and urban actors within Thika town. Street vendors are defined and categorized into different classes based on Jerome Monnet (2006), who notes that street vendors who move from one place to another-carrying their goods on their hands, heads, or shoulders; those with temporary structures and finally, those who display their goods on a mat or gunny bags. Those with temporary structures are sometimes deemed permanent and pay annual licenses for their space. Their orientation to get to that state must have started as hawkers who move from one place to another without a permanent space. At the initial stage, the street vendor identifies space, and as the frequency of appropriating the same space every day increases, one is perceived to own the space. The ownership might allow one to develop a temporary structure, which may require the trader to be paid daily or monthly fees for the space.

The chapter also highlights how the spaces in Thika are appropriated, especially according to the time and the location of the appropriation by the street vendors. According to the section, street vendors who appropriate spaces between 5 am-8 am and 5 pm-10 pm do not face harassment

from the county council because it's outside the operating hours of the county askaris. The street vendors operating between 8 am and 4 pm usually face harassment unless they operate in formal markets like Mukiriti, Jamhuri, and Makongeni.

Various categories of actors are classified as either public or private. Public actors consist of national and county governments, while the other actor in this category is the political environment. These public actors' actions directly influence street vending because the public actors (The National and County governments) are the implementers of the laws meant to regulate street vendors. In this category, compromises or conflicts occur as the street vendors either pay bribes to the enforcement team to remain in the street or are evicted due to non-payment of bribes. The political class uses its power to protect street vendors in this category as political resources during the elections or tightens its grip on power by evicting the street vendor to "clean up" the town. The political actors are seasonal though a new trend seems to have come up in Thika where street vendors are protected from harassment by their political leaders even during the electoral period. It is meant to protect the "voters within a given jurisdiction" against any harassment from the local authority. For any trader to be protected, they must be within a given ward or constituency, raising the question of geopolitics or the right to the city.

The chapter has focused on the legal framework regulating the informal sector. Various acts of parliament, bills of parliament, and the constitution of Kenya 2010 are discussed since they regulate informal trade differently. The constitution grants County governments 15% of the National budget concerning the economic potential of benefitting the informal sector. Several articles in the constitution are meant to promote social and Economic development, the right of citizens to participate in any genuine livelihood activity that ensures one gets an adequate food supply, and encourage public participation in the management of urban spaces. Other acts like The Micro and Small Enterprises Act, 2012, and Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill, 2019 boost informal trading by recognizing them like any other traders. Urban areas and cities act of 2011, together with the Environmental Management and co-ordination act, recognize the presence of the informal sector in urban areas but do not criminalize the activity. The local authority's by-laws seem to be the only legislation that bans street vending activities in the urban space, going against the other pieces of legislation already discussed. The Kenya vision

2030 focuses on the informal sector as an alternative to creating employment in the country. It aims at strengthening the informal associations into SACCOs, which eventually graduate into fully-fledged banks.

The last section of this chapter explains the influence of private actors in the street vending flow. The impact of various actors varies on different scales; for example, street vendor associations have had a pivotal role in determining street vending sites or times of operations in the town. Some associations take pride in acquiring street vending sites for their members. Other associations close to the county government, e.g., formal traders associations, have collaborated with the county government to evict street vendors in the streets of Thika.

The other identified private actors in this chapter are the supermarkets, which view street vendors indifferently. To some, street vendors are not their competitors but traders who block entry to the supermarkets for their customers. For some supermarkets, street vendors are considered part of their customers who are welcome at any time of the day. The financial institutions “formalize” street vendors by giving those loans as any other customers. Thika residents have a different attitude toward street vendors. Whereas the traders are a nuisance when it comes to moving along the street, yet provide cheap goods at convenient places for one to buy. To the institutions of higher learning (Universities and colleges in Thika), part of street vendors is their students who need to get enough money to pay for their school fees and sustain their lives while living in Thika town.

For the residents of Thika, street vendors came with advantages and disadvantages. To some residents, street vendors provide cheap goods at convenient locations, especially on the pavements. To the owners of rental houses or Landlords in Thika, street vendors represent clients who occupy their houses as tenants and, therefore, a source of income. While to other Thika dwellers, Street vendors have been a menace and cause of congestion and a rise in petty crimes within the CBD. The complaints have been that Thika was once one of the cleanest and most organized towns in Kenya, is littered and congested due to the invasion of street vendors

This chapter focuses on the second objective of this research, which was to find out how the regulation of street trading affects Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and

their hinterland. All these acts affect street vending together with other actors who have a way of regulating informal activities through their actions.

## **Chapter 5 -Flow of People, Products, and Information**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Metropolisation and globalization have increased population, financial and production flows, and information. In Thika, like many other secondary towns, traders from various parts of the country contribute to the flow of goods and information. The Rural-urban linkages between Thika and its hinterland have been noted since the 1960s during the industrialization of Thika town (Stamp 1980; Kanorio 2019). The linkages of Thika to Nairobi, the rural areas, and other parts of the country are becoming numerous due to improved infrastructure, as noted in chapters one and two. Different actors like street vendors, wholesalers, and brokers are responsible for distributing agricultural products from rural areas to Thika and manufactured goods from Nairobi.

The actors involved in this flow of goods are also responsible for bringing new information, such as new designs and fashion styles, to the secondary town or rural areas, especially when goods come from the city or other countries (Mainet and Racaud 2014). The presence of developed infrastructure like roads makes the flow of goods and information better, as noted by Rodrigues (2020) while explaining conditions for realizing a spatial interaction theory, as noted in chapter one. Rodrigues argues that for transferability or flow to be possible, transport infrastructures (modes and terminals) must be present to support an interaction between two places. The infrastructures must have a capacity and availability compatible with the requirements of such an interaction.

This chapter consists of data on the specific areas where street vendors and other actors source their goods before they flow to the streets or markets in Thika. The researcher observes some street vendors while purchasing goods in the capital Nairobi and follows others to the hinterlands in Nyandarua, Machakos, Makueni, Nyeri, and Kirinyaga. Some of the goods are outsourced within the formal markets in Thika town and outside the country, like Tanzania, Burundi, and Ethiopia

The information about access to sources of goods and markets frequented was important in

understanding street vendors' flows and operations. The discussion of the findings will provide an understanding of how street vendors facilitate the "Metropolisation from below" process. The analysis, therefore, responds to the first part of the study's research question: (i) To what extent does the street vendors' flow contribute to Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and their hinterland to globalization?

## **5.2 Thika's CBD**

The research is concentrated more on Thika's CBD, as shown in map 8. It is an area enclosed by Kenyatta highway, Upper Road, workshop road, and Haile Selassie road. The CBD includes the Thika town foundation pillar, Christine Wangari garden, Thika stadium, and the upcountry Main Matatu stage. The CBD area comprises five major supermarkets: Naivas supermarket, Mathai supermarket, Kassmat Supermarket Society Stores Supermarket, and Tuskys supermarket. The significance of the supermarkets in Thika town is that nearly all of them experience a beehive of activities, especially at their main entrance by street vendors. Most of these vendors are positioned strategically near supermarkets to attract human traffic to do their shopping. Street vendors target customers who might require some carrier bags before entering the supermarkets or generally offer cheaper goods to customers who might have remained with some money to spend on their merchandise.

In addition, there are dozens of small supermarkets and shops, especially Hardware shops, boutiques/Beauty shops, Animal feeds shops, Stationery/bookshops, and electronic shops. We have several wooden Stalls (Vibanda) at the Thika main stage, which normally trade as wholesalers and Retail. Most of the traders in these stalls normally pay a license to the sub-county and mainly sell their goods at a lower price and on a credit basis to street vendors who eventually pay in the evening or at an agreed period.



Map 7 Satellite Map Thika town and major installations



(Source: Google Satellite Images; Retrieved on 19th November 2019)



Commercial Street is one of the most important areas this research focuses on, starting from the junction of Workshop road and ending at Stadium road. Commercial Street is one of the busiest streets in Thika, characterized by many street vendors, especially from 5 pm to 10 pm. Nearly all major streets in Thika town connect to Commercial streets, as shown on map 9.

From the headcount of street vendors conducted by the researcher on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, there are approximately 410 along Commercial Street and the adjoining Stadium road. These streets, as shown in Map 9, include Mama Ngina Drive, Kwame Nkrumah Road, Uhuru street, Kisii street, Kilimambogo street, Stadium road, and Kenyatta highway, two of the main market, i.e., Mukiriti and Jamhuri Markets. The street vending activities surround the entire stadium, strategically located in the CBD. The stadium's location has not gone well with leaders in Thika. They have been suggesting its relocation to somewhere else to pave the way for constructing the multi-purpose hawkers market. Former Member of Parliament for Juja constituency (which was initially part of Thika town), the late Hon. George Thuo<sup>57</sup> is quoted in parliament as giving a solution for street vending in Thika.

*Box 4 Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard)*

“.....again I want to refer to the place I am most used to, which is Thika. Hawking is such a protracted issue that it does not seem to have a long-term solution, yet the ministry can choose to convert Thika Stadium, which to me is ill-located, into a multi-storied hawkers market. Relocate everybody to it and build a new stadium for the residents in the lower part of Makongeni where human beings are. It does not have to be in the city Centre! However, we can turn the current market into multi-storied facilities for hawkers. It may sound expensive, but the long-term benefits are worthwhile....” Hon.George Thuo MP Juja Constituency

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<sup>57</sup> Kenya National Assembly Official Record (Hansard) 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008

### **5.3 Description of streets in Thika and products sold**

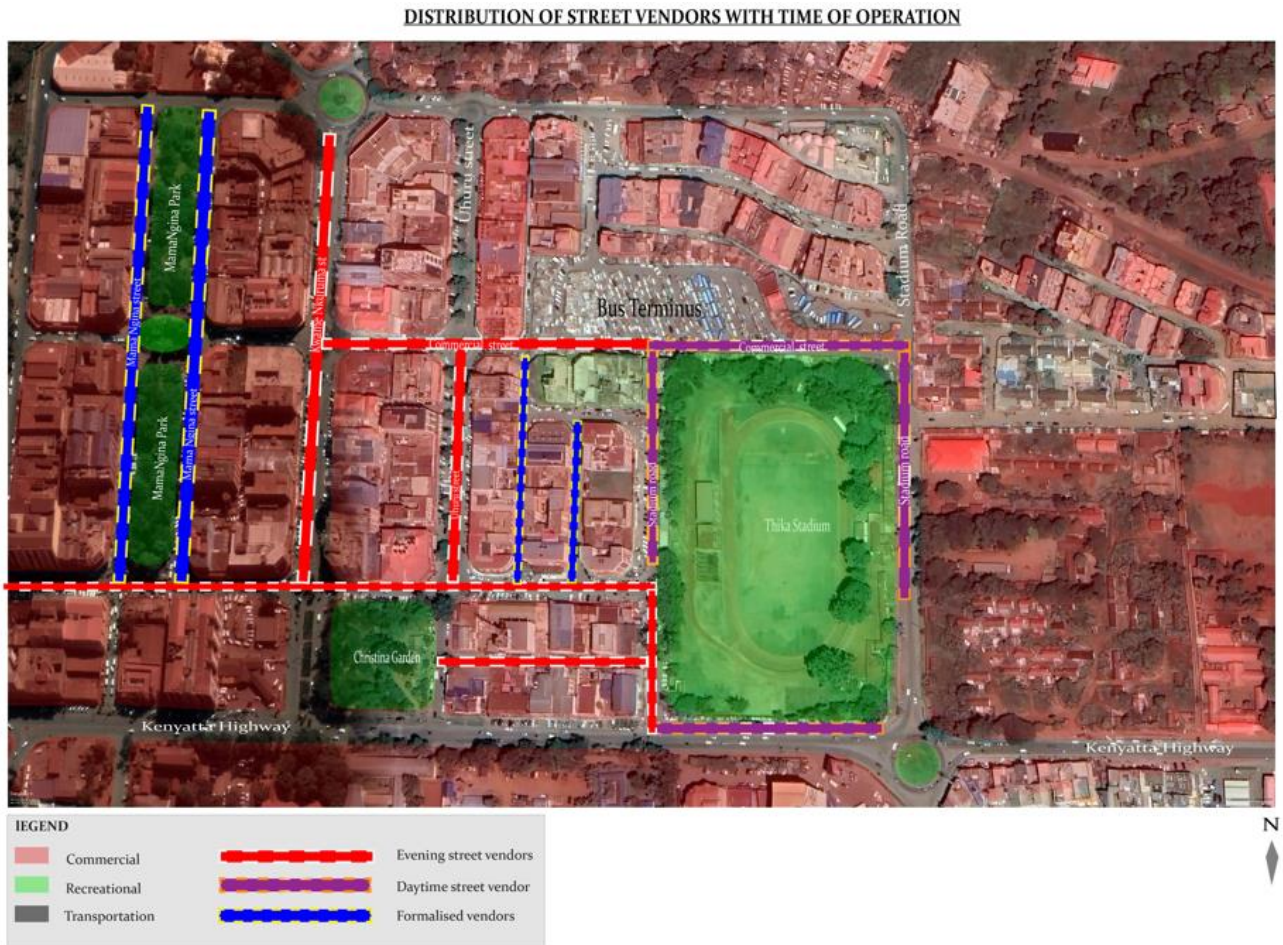
#### **Commercial Street**

Commercial Street is perhaps the busiest street in Thika town, measuring about 470m long and filled with street vendors, especially in the evening. It has many matatu stages adding to the congestion of cars and human traffic. The street is a destination for many commuters and a point where most of the journey starts or ends. The street starts from the junction of Crossroad, where there is Naivas supermarket opposite Equity bank. Overlooking Equity bank is a Matatus stage for passenger vehicles whose destinations are the hinterlands of Thika, like Kiambu, Ruiru, Mang'u, and Naivasha in Nakuru County. The street ends up near the White-Line hotel. Products commonly sold, especially in the evening, by street vendors include second-hand clothes, second-hand shoes, fruits, mats, and cooked food.

The street is an attractive area for informal trading because of its proximity to administrative services like Thika Sub-county offices, Police station, Post office, and various banks like Equity and Family Bank, making it have flows of the working population. Alongside it, major supermarkets like Naivas, Kassmatt, Twiga Mart, and society stores attract customers who impulse buy on their way in and out of the supermarket.

The other Matatu stages on the commercial streets are near Equity Bank; the Kihanya Building; an alley between Thika Arcade and Absa Bank; at Mama-Ngina Garden, and the Chania stage at Shell petrol Station at the very end of the street, which crosses Stadium road. There is the Matatu stage for passenger vehicles plying to the main estates of Thika like Makongeni, Kiandutu, Kisii estate, Kiganjo, Posta, Muthaiga, and Muguga. Stadium road also connects Commercial Street to the Main upcountry stage, making it a meeting point for many passengers moving in and out of Thika Town.

Map 8 Distribution of streets vendors with the time of operation



( Source: Google Maps 2022 with some modification)

### Streets and types of products sold

1. Mama Ngina street-consists of small kiosks where vendors sell fruits and services such as making rubber stamps. Many Tuk-tuks ferry commuters to the main stage or other markets. These streets surround Mama-Ngina Garden
2. Workshop road- here, the vendors are specialized in the selling of animal feeds, there are bicycle repairs, sell of LPG gas, and small kiosks selling cigarette sweets and sodas
3. Stadium road- covers one side of the Thika Municipal Stadium. Most street vendors sell

second-hand books for both primary and secondary schools. Most of these book vendors pay annual fees to the county Government and have been allowed to construct semi-permanent structures. Others deal with selling groundnuts, new shoes, second-hand clothes, and fruits. The road comprises various Matatus stages that link Thika CBD to the most populated estates such as Makongeni, Kiandutu, and Landless.

4. Kisii Street- The most common product street vendors sell are fruits mounted on mkokoteni. Most of these vendors start trading in the morning until evening without harassment. The vendors are semi-permanent and pay monthly or daily fees to the local authorities. Fresh fruit juice from the same vendors and a few second-hand booksellers are also found on this street.

5. Uhuru Street is mostly characterized by vending vegetables and fruits, especially near the main entry to Tusky's Supermarket. The street is also unique because it hosts many commercial sex workers at night, meaning some street vendors can operate the whole night, especially those selling coffee, condoms, and sweets. It is a street where people never sleep in Thika because of the nightclubs and bars along which the main attraction tonight is revelers and commercial sex workers.

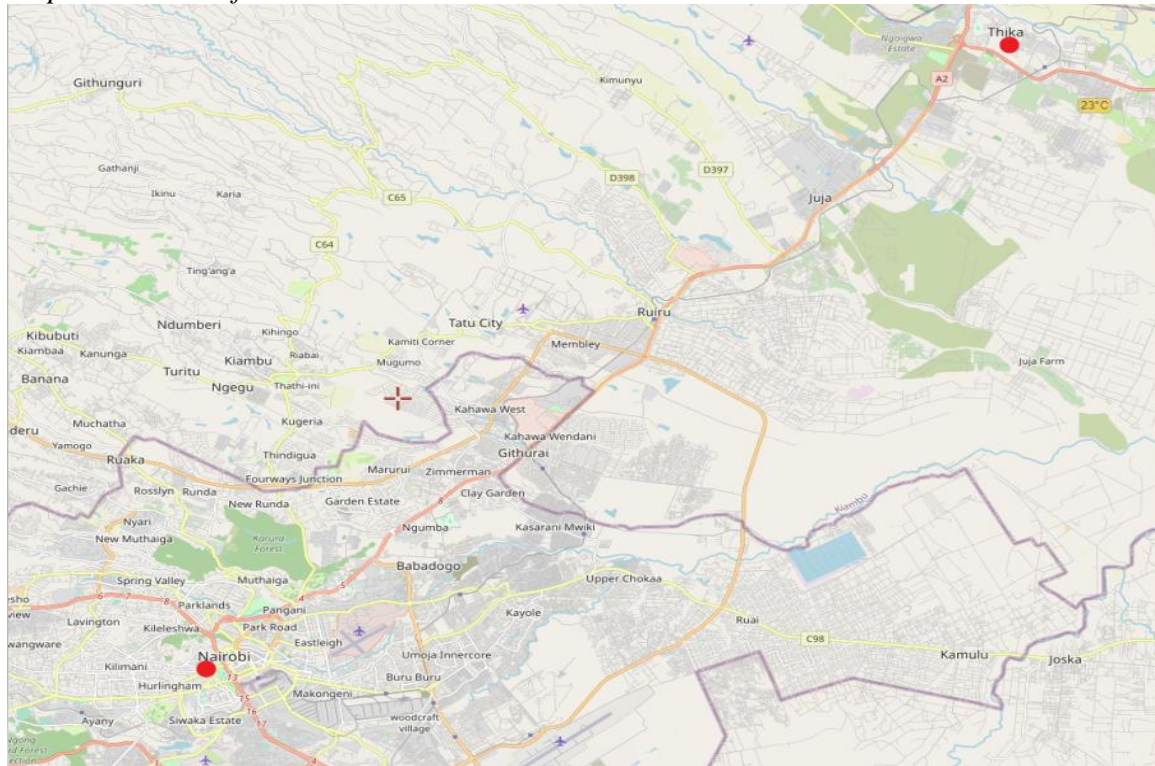
7. Kwame Nkrumah Street is characterized by vending new clothes, second-hand sweaters, and shirts. There are also many commercial sex workers on this street at night, meaning it is one of those streets that operate throughout the night due to several nightclubs.

8. General Kago road specializes in selling second-hand clothes, portraits, and hardware items; those located on the same road but near the gate of Thika level five hospital mainly deal with fruits, empty bottles, Plastic Basins, spoons, and Cups, while those near General Kago Mortuary sell lots of flowers and bottled water; those near Mount Kenya university and Thika Technical Training Institute are specialized in the selling of stationery, textbooks, photocopiers, second-hand clothes, fruits, smokies /Sausages, boiled eggs, and boiled maize

### 5.3 Flows of people and goods from Nairobi to Thika

With factors such as infrastructure development and many learning institutions, Thika has become a place of intense urbanization and demographic dynamics. This urbanization has led to its strong link with Nairobi and its environs. Street vendors have formed daily movement patterns between Nairobi-Thika (as shown on Map9), which are about 40kms apart. This movement has brought street vendor flows from Nairobi to Thika, although limited in time, space, and some policies against street vending.

*Map 9 Location of Nairobi and Thika*



(Source: Google map 2020)

This flow of street vendors mostly occurs in the evening between 5-9 pm. This time is favorable because of two reasons; First, the local authorities usually close their operations by 5 pm, and second, it coincides with the time when most people are coming back to Thika from their workplaces in Nairobi or around the surrounding towns. Thika is also a connecting point for those coming from other surrounding towns and those picking a Matatu (14-sitter public service

vehicle) to go to their residential areas. Mr. James<sup>58</sup> explains where most of the traders originate from in the evening.

*The shocking thing about this is that majority of those who appropriate spaces in the CBD in the evening to sell their commodities are not Thikarians (Thika residents); 90% of these hawkers commute daily from Nairobi, especially from Githurai because they have identified and taken advantage of the business opportunities in Thika Town. As Thika's hawkers get intimidated and shy away from the aggressiveness and the prices offered by the Nairobi hawkers, these Nairobians grab this opportunity to make the best out of Thika's prosperous economy. A few of Thika's hawkers who brave themselves end up selling their commodities in the periphery. The other groups that form the largest clientele are the thousands of students who have joined the Thika populace from our outskirts to join our numerous middle-level colleges. A walk through the streets in the evenings would get almost anything from these open-air night traders, be it clothing, pieces of jewelry, shoes, electronics, fruits & vegetables. We also have several make-shift 'hotels' that offer drinks and meals to those who had no time to cook at home and more so the Matatu crew who these days operate 24-hours to and from Nairobi City*

This type of trading creates multiple movements within and outside Thika. The movement has brought a lot of competition and forced traders to develop new strategies for changing their places of trading and outsourcing their goods. The formal shops within Thika have to move into the streets in the evening to make more profits. Formal shop owners usually take advantage of customers in the evening. Most customers unwilling to enter shops in a hurry to go home would see and pick up the products along the streets because of the convenience. Flows of traders from the capital city Nairobi to Thika become interesting because normally, the flow is supposed to be from the secondary town to the city.

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with a blogger of the Website Thika Town Today Mr. James on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020



On the reasons as to why a majority of the street vendors flow to Thika and not to the nearby towns, the study shows that 65% preferred Thika because the local authorities were not as tough as those from Nairobi, while 20% said stiff competition in Nairobi was pushing them to Thika; An interview with Kimani (second-hand pullover) seller explains this...

*I prefer coming to Thika and selling my product because one can get a higher profit; if you sell the same to a customer in Nairobi, they will bargain for lower prices. The reason is that customers in Nairobi can easily access Gikomba or Eastleigh and get the same item at low prices. Therefore, my profits are low whenever I sell my products in Nairobi against the profit I will get when I sell them in Thika. I realize that I make more income irrespective of the transport cost of coming to Thika when traveling from Nairobi.*

As indicated in the earlier chapters, the majority of traders who come to Thika seem to be running away from violence and harassment against them, especially in Eastleigh (Photo 15 shows street vendors being evicted from Nairobi city center)

*Photo 15 Street vendors being evicted from Nairobi*



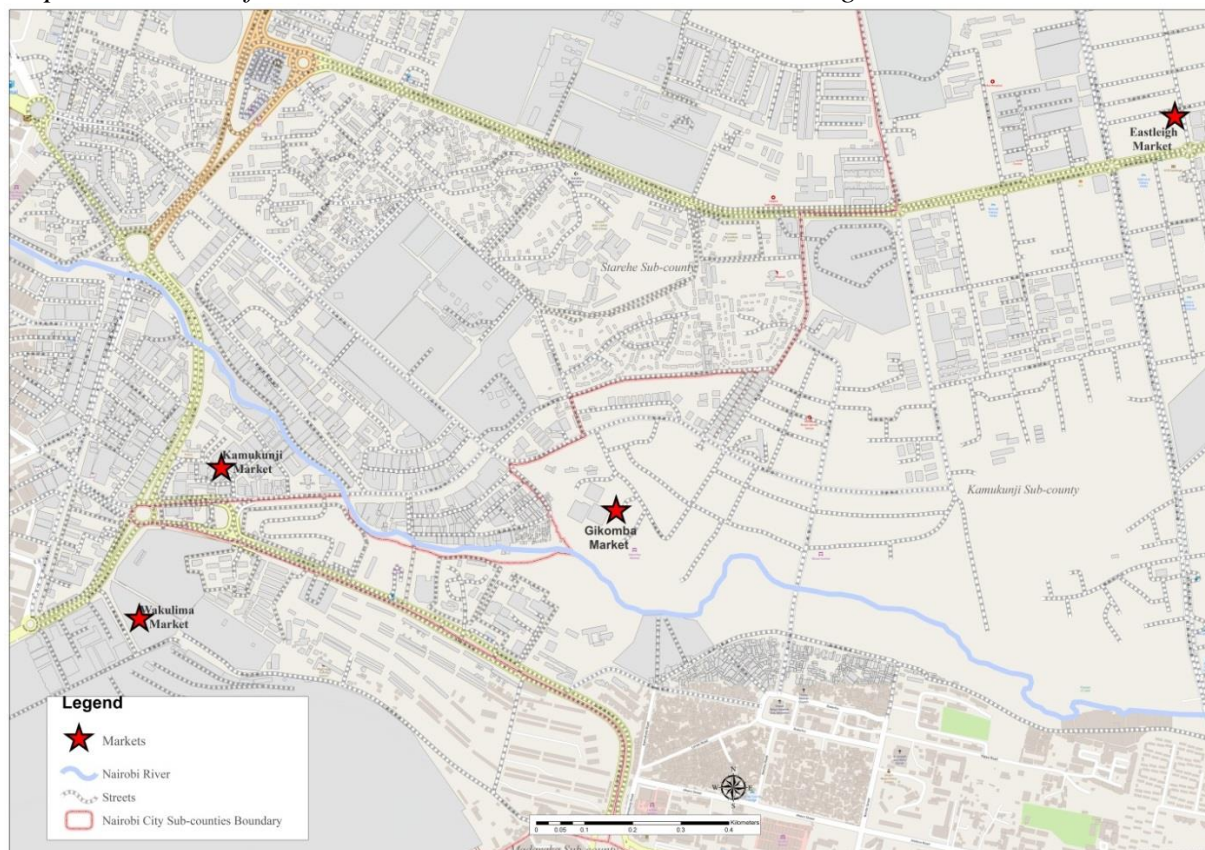
(Source: Author2020)

The clashes between street vendors in Eastleigh and shop owners forced the police to intervene in September and October 2016. It coincided with the electioneering period; therefore, most of

Thika's hawkers' harassment was minimal. In an interview with the residents and the customers who buy from street vendors, most concur that the street invasion in Thika started towards the end of 2016.

The remaining 15% of the street vendors admitted that Thika was more accessible, especially with the completion of the Thika superhighway in 2012. This 15% are the traders who come from towns near Nairobi like Githurai and prefer to come to Thika because of its accessibility via the Thika superhighway. Unlike in the past, the opening of the superhighway has made it cheaper and easier to access Thika from Nairobi and its environs. Street vendors who sell their goods in Thika outsource their products from four major Nairobi markets: Wakulima market (Wakulima), Gikomba, Eastleigh, and Kamukunji market, which provides a variety of goods. Map 10 shows the four markets majorly accessed by street vendors.

*Map 10 Location of Nairobi markets where vendors source their goods*



(Source: Google map 2020)

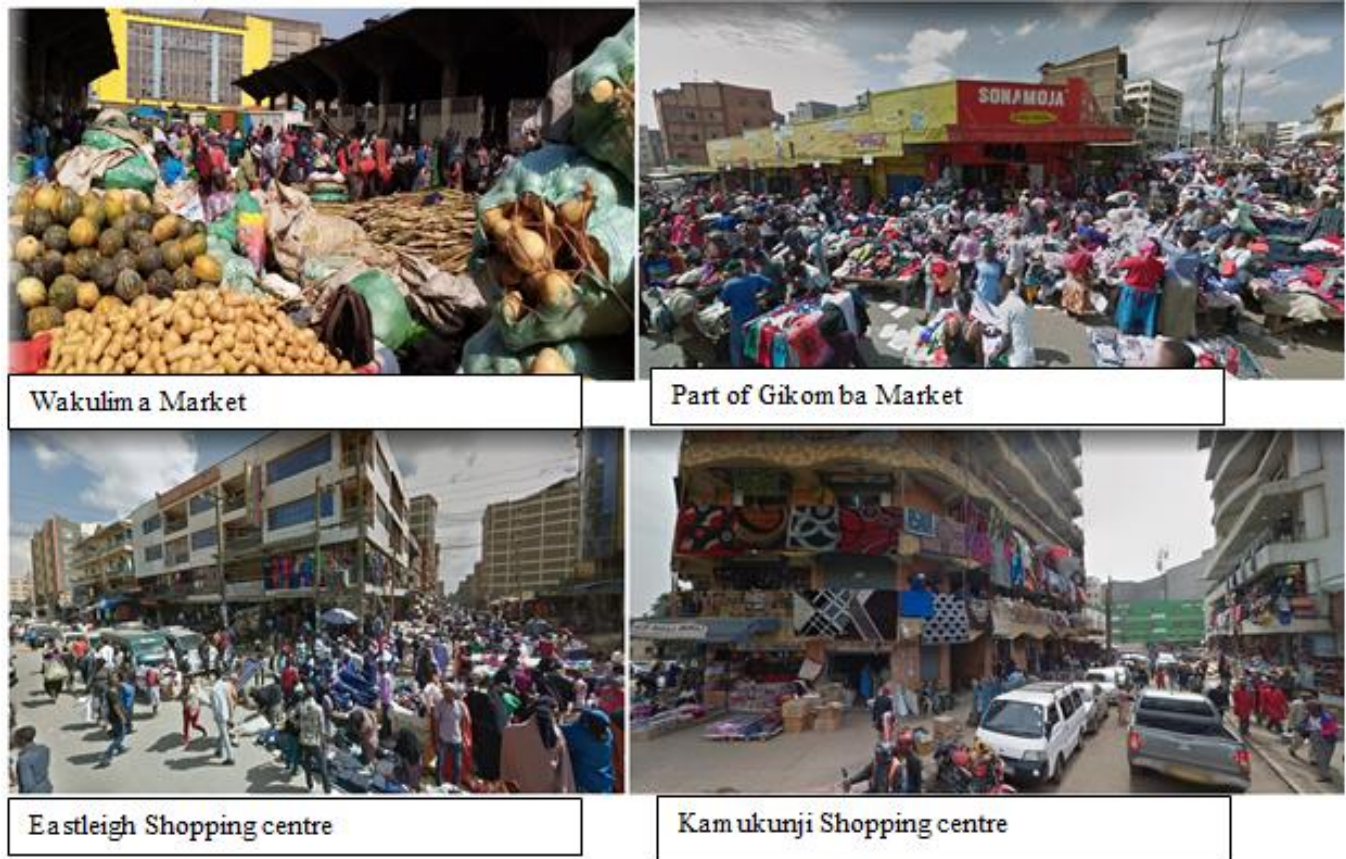


Table 7 Nairobi markets and types of commodities sold

Market	Type of goods sold
1. Gikomba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Second-hand clothes-jumpers, coats, trousers, socks, hats, beddings, Trench coats, pullovers, skirts, blouses, and infant clothes</li> <li>-Second-hand leather shoes and both sports shoes</li> <li>-Weaves and cosmetics</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B</b> The market is busy all days of the week though Tuesdays and Fridays are the busiest, especially for those traders buying to sell in other markets</p>
2. Eastleigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-New Clothes-dresses, shirts, coats suits, Somali wedding dresses, called <i>Dirac</i></li> <li>-Electronics, fabric, Purses, prayer mats,</li> <li>-Jewelry - necklaces and bracelets</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B</b> Most items come from China and other countries like Ethiopia, Dubai, and Turkey.</p>
3. Kamukunji	<p>The major products are plastics; other products include utensils, home decor accessories, bedding, carpets, plastic household items, beauty products, diapers, children's toys, clothes, shoes, and bags.</p> <p><b>N.B</b> Most of the products on sale are from China.</p>
4. Wakulima Market	<p>Sukumawiki (Kales), maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, Kunde, arrow roots lettuce, spinach, celery, daniyas, coconuts, avocados, ginger, pears, tomatoes, bananas, mangoes, tangerines, oranges, plums, pawpaw, pumpkins, brinjals, beans, capsicums, onion, sugarcane, potatoes, peas, Asian vegetables, mangoes, bananas (cooking), mulberry, loquats, pineapples, Cabbages, carrots, rhubarb, spring onions, Brussels sprouts, leeks, turnip, cauliflower, and beetroot</p> <p><b>NB.</b> The market is officially open for trading at 5 am, but traders start arriving at Wakulima market as early as 2 am.</p>

(Source: Author 2020)

*Photo 16 Nairobi major markets where street vendors source their goods*



(Source: Author 2020)

The movements of street vendors to these markets when outsourcing their goods depends on; i) the frequency of their sales of these goods or ii) the availability of finances by street vendors. The movements from Nairobi to Thika were done not only by traders who lived in the city but also by traders in Thika. The traders go to Nairobi to buy goods in the mentioned markets and sell them on the streets of Thika. A good example is Winnie<sup>59</sup>, who was formerly a street vendor in Thika while she was a student at Thika Technical Training Institute. She is currently a Loan officer at Faulu Bank Thika and narrates how she was operating as a street vendor and a college student at the same time...

*... I used to go to Gikomba at 3 am to buy second-hand clothes and return to*

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<sup>59</sup> Interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 at Faulu bank-Thika

*Thika early enough before beginning my classes at Thika Technical Training Institute (TTTI) at exactly 8:00 am. We used to have a partnership business selling mitumba with colleagues in the same institution. We would organize a program on who will carry out the purchase of goods at Gikomba and the person who was to be in charge of selling the goods in the streets of Thika. We used to have a stall at Mukiriti and would come to the streets of Thika in the evening for about 3years when I was a college student. This business would give us enough money to supplement our needs in school in addition to what our parents gave. After formal employment, I was no longer in the business, but some of her friends were still doing business.*

Most traders from Nairobi and its environs who appropriate spaces in Thika normally use Matatus to move their goods. The most preferred means are buses because of being cheaper and a bigger space to carry the merchandise. One good example of the buses preferred by customers is Kenya Mpya<sup>60</sup>, as shown in photo 16, which plies between Thika and Nairobi. The bus is convenient because it can accommodate the passenger and his cargo, as shown in photo 16B. The 51 sitters Bus Company which is among the biggest in Nairobi, has a fleet of 170 buses ferrying approximately 46,000 passengers daily, making about 270 trips per day

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/corporate/technology/bus-firm-driving-matatu-business-on-hi-tech-lane-3231322> (Thursday December 17 2020)

*Photo 17 Joy Kenya/Kenya Mpya Buses waiting bay in Nairobi*



(Source: Author 2020)

The other bus companies plying the Nairobi Thika route include Thika Road Sacco (seen in photo 17) and Chania Bus Company. As noted earlier, street vendors prefer the buses because of their bigger carrying capacity though Nissan Matatus are also popular among those traveling from Thika to Nairobi



A street vendor getting his bale of second hand clothes in Kenya Mpya bus transporting him to the streets of Thika. Sometimes the street vendor is forced to pay for his merchandise if he has to stay with his cargo on the seat of the bus as shown on photo 16B

(Source: Author 2020)



*Photo 18 Thika Bound Matatu from Gikomba to Thika Town*



(Source: Author 2020)

#### **5.4 Flows of vendors and goods from Thika's hinterland**

Some street vendors also source their goods from the hinterland of Thika or some formal markets in the town. Most areas in Thika's hinterland (rural areas) are rich in agriculture and still connected to Thika through the growth of cash crops such as coffee in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, Rural-urban linkages were a feature of labour relations during this period of industrial development of Thika town. The urban population was sustained by agricultural and rural productivity (Tacoli 2002; Owuor 2006). In Thika, some traders from Ruiru and Murang'a were involved in farming and selling food crops to the urban dwellers employed in the industries and plantations (Kanorio 2019).

Racaud (2019) notes that the countryside best connected to the city finds an outlet for agricultural produce in the urban market based on national or regional market logic. The actors in

the rural areas, such as wholesalers and street vendors, connect rural areas to the outside world through their actions of supplying goods and selling them. Good examples are cabbages supplied at Madaraka market Thika; the market chairman Mr.Ngari<sup>61</sup> explains where he distributes his products...

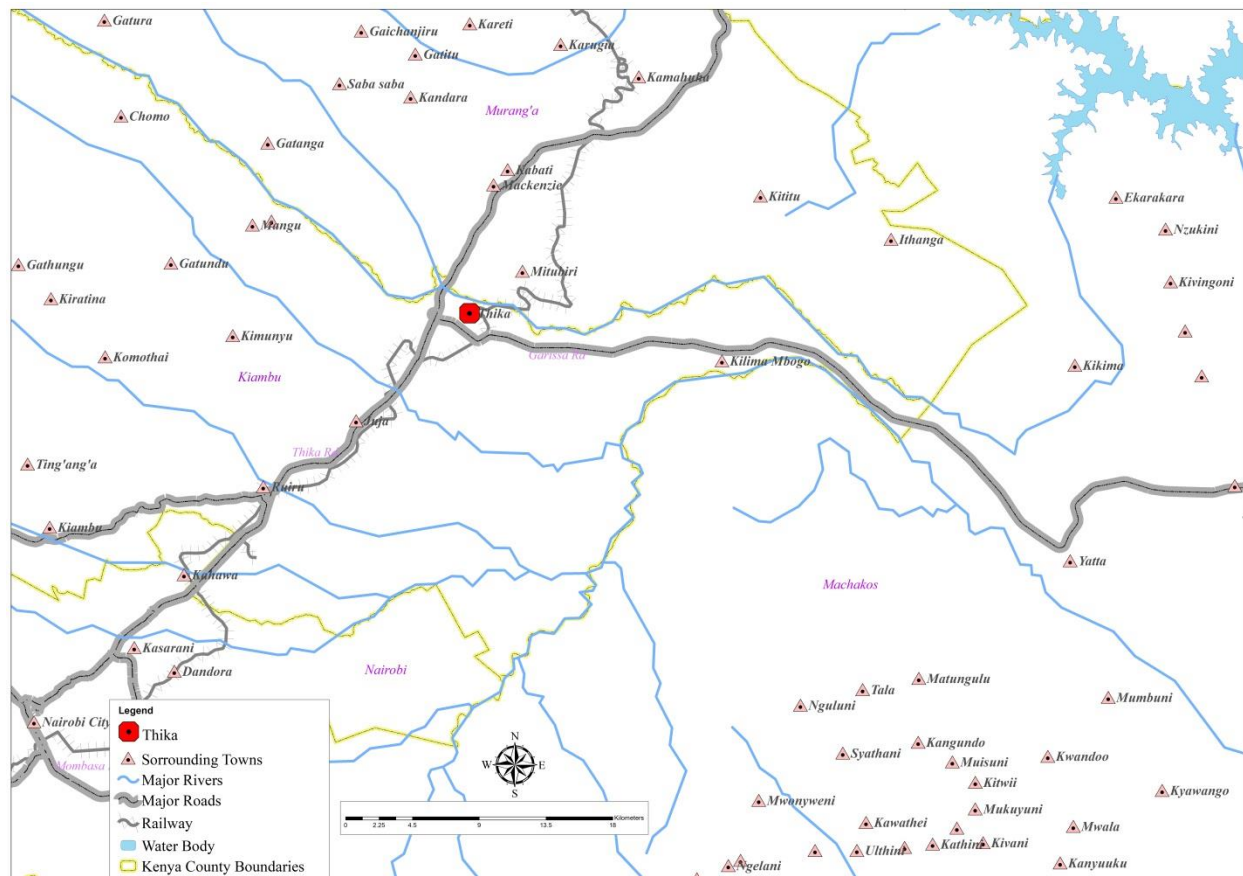
*I normally sell my cabbages to northern Kenya, especially in Garissa and as far as Wajir, especially when supplying food to troops of Kenya in Somalia. We normally get orders as far as Somali, which greatly depends on Madaraka markets for the vegetables*

As mentioned earlier, the hinterlands of Thika include areas within Kiambu County and surrounding counties. Areas within Kiambu County include Gatundu, Mang'u, Gatukuyu, Gakoe, Ruiru, and Juja town. The surrounding counties include Murang'a County, where we have vendors from Gatanga, Rwegetha, Kenol, Kandara, and Makuyu. Other counties include Machakos, especially Kilimambogo, oldonyo sabuk, Kithimani, and Matuu, which borders Thika Sub-county. From Nyandarua County, there are several centers like Engineer, Njambini, Kinangop, and Bushi. A street vendor also supplies his oranges from Makueni using his pick-up. Some of these areas are shown on map 11

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<sup>61</sup> interview on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

*Map 11 Hinterlands of Thika, which are major sources of its goods*



(Source: Google maps slightly modified)

From the research, most of the goods brought are agricultural products and, therefore, directly link farmers to the streets of Thika. There seem to be strong spatial and economic interactions between the farm and the streets of Thika town CBD. As Mbonile (2016) notes, such interactions can potentially change the farming and marketing systems in these regions, leading to profound changes in the livelihood and mobility of people in these regions. The flow of goods is the path of movement of goods and the sequence of goods in a supply chain (Babylon Dictionary as quoted by Mbonile 2016). In the case of Thika town, the supply chain starts from the hinterlands and ends up in the Madaraka market (vegetables and fruits) or Jamuhuri market (cereals). These goods end up in the two markets as wholesale markets in Thika town. Individual traders store their goods in town warehouses before selling them on the streets. Some of these warehouses include empty stalls found in Mukiriti market, as shown in Photos 20 and 21

*Table 8 Place of origin, type, and markets of commodities in Thika Town*

<b>Place of origin</b>	<b>Type of commodities</b>	<b>Destination</b>
Murang'a -Gatanga, Rwegetha, Kandara, kenol, Makuyu	Yams, Passion fruits, Tamarillo fruits, avocados, Bananas, Macadamia	Madaraka Market and streets of Thika
Nyeri and Kirinyaga County-Karatina, Kiagwaci, Kirinyaga	Tomatoes, Pishori rice, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes	Jamhuri Market, Madaraka Market and streets of Thika
Machakos-Matuu, Kithimani, Oldonyo sabuk, Kilimambogo	Passion fruits, oranges, tomatoes, pumpkins	Madaraka Market and streets of Thika
Makueni County	Oranges, Mangoes	Madaraka Market and streets of Thika
Nyandarua- Engineer, Wanjohi, Kariamu, Miharati, Njambini, Kwa-Haraka, Yaang'a, Bushi and Magumu	Cabbages, Irish Potatoes, green peas, French beans, Haricots	Madaraka Market and streets of Thika
Kiambu- Gatundu, Mang'u, Gatukuyu, Gakoe, Ruiru and Juja town	Passion fruits, Bananas, Yams	Madaraka Market and streets of Thika

(Source: Author 2020)

The selling of goods on the streets of Thika from the hinterlands, like Murang'a, has been going on for quite some time. From the Parliament Hansard of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008, the Former Member of Parliament for Juja (where Thika Town was also part of his constituency), the Late Hon. George Thuo is quoted saying.....

“In the Nairobi Metropolitan area and talking of Thika where I come from, which is now part of this metropolis, no by-law seems to exist. You can get up from your home in Murang'a, find that your tomatoes are ripe, then come to Thika Town and sell them anywhere on the road, and yet you have a shop or bazaar. You do not mind road users or the congestion....”

The Hansard report shows how Thika has been a place of multiple movements for most products from the surrounding towns. The movements of goods from these areas depend on the type and availability of transport. The field interviews, observations, and questionnaires presented to some



street vendors showed that 90% hire Lorries, pick-ups, or Probox (as shown in photo 18 ) to pick up their supplies. These means are used especially by traders coming from outlying areas like Nyandarua (from Miharati to Thika 121 km), Karatina (62km from Thika), Makueni (104km from Thika), and Kiangwaci (70km). For those areas near Thika, like Matuu, Kilimambogo, Gatanga, and Kenol, public service vehicles (PSV) and the use of Bodaboda are the main means of transport.

*Photo 19 Transporting goods from Nyandarua to Thika at night*



Various means (A-Probox car; B-Lorry; C-Pick-up) that are used to transport fresh agricultural products from Nyandarua County to various markets in Thika .Most of these products find their way to the streets of Thika through the street vendors

(Source: Author 2020)

Some vendors also play the role of farmers and suppliers of the same items in the streets of Thika. These vendors do some farming to supplement their incomes, especially when one of the activities is in peak season. Like Racaud (2019) found in his study at Mwanjelwa market (Tanzania), some hawkers attend their farming activities for one or two days a week, thus integrating agricultural activities into their schedule. It means having one foot on the farm and one foot in the street vending activities (Chaléard and Dubresson 1989 as quoted by Racaud 2019). In the case of Thika, there are some similarities; for example, Njoroge<sup>62</sup>, the second book vendor, normally goes to the street of Thika during the school opening season when the demand for books is high, says....

*Mimi huwa nakuja Thika kuuza vitabu wakati shule zinafunguliwa kwa sababu ndio kuna biashara nyingi. Huwa nauza vitabu vya mitumba kwa watoto wakirudi shule kwasababu ni vya bei rahisi ikilinganishwa na vile vipya. Hivyo wakati mwingi mimi huwa naja mwezi wa Januari ambao ni mwanzo wa muhula wa kwanza, halafu narudi tena mwezi wa mei wakati muhula wa pili unaanza na baadae mwezi wa septemba ambao ni mwanzo wa muhula wa tatu. Baada ya mwezi moja hivi baada ya kufunguliwa kwa shule mimi hurudi mashambani kuendelea kulima shamba langu ambalo hunipatia mapato ya ziada kwa familia yangu pamoja na uuchuuzi wa barabarani.*

I often come to Thika to sell books when schools are open because the demand is normally high at this time. I often sell second-hand books for children returning to school because they are cheaper than new textbooks. So most of the time, I come in January, the beginning of the first semester, then back in May when the second semester begins, and later in September, which is the beginning of the third semester. After two or three weeks of school reopening, I return to my farm to continue cultivating my crops, providing extra income for my family and land

Both activities are important for Njoroge because street vending provides money to buy farm inputs. Coincidentally street vending peak seasons occur during farming activities off-peak

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<sup>62</sup> An interview on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

season. Therefore the trader can get income around the year to meet his family's needs. This flexible system which enables street vendors to earn income in both urban and rural areas, demonstrates livelihood diversification, according to Bryceson (1996 as quoted by Racaud 2019)

Another example of a street vendor who engages in the two activities is Baba Simon, who has two farms; one in Rwegetha (Murang'a County) and another in Matuu (Machakos County). He normally gets assistance from his wife to undertake farming and street vending simultaneously. The next box describes how Baba Simon has been able to undertake the two activities simultaneously on two of his farm and the streets of Thika town.

#### *Box 5 Street vendor cum farmer*

This box presents how a farmer-cum, a street vendor, has survived in both sectors and the impact of his survival tactic on family settings and societal well-being in a rural set-up. It is an example of how spaces in rural and urban areas can be used as a resource to gain a livelihood. According to Huff's (1964) theories on the spatial interaction model, traders have several alternative destinations. The vendors may visit different destinations to maximize their utility rather than restricting their patronage to one destination. Every destination within the geographic area with which the trader is familiar has some chance of being patronized from the source using the chosen route.

On this evening of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019, at about 6:30 pm on my fieldwork, I meet Baba Simon at an alley that connects Thika's Main stage and stadium road. There are two such alleys connecting the main stage towards Commercial Street. The second one connects the Upcountry Bus stage to Kilimambogo street and comprises several traders who specialize in the selling vegetables such as kale, cabbages, garlic, and onions, among others. This particular one (Alley), where Mr. John is selling, has other traders selling different products and services. The first trader in this alley sells fish fillets and fish oil; the next trader is a service provider using a weighing machine to measure people's weight and height. The third on the line is a trader selling some passion fruits and Tomatoes, Baba Simon selling Passion fruits and Tamarillo fruits. At the end of this alley are two other traders' one selling second-hand clothes (mainly shirts) and the trader selling sweets.

Baba Simon is busy selling his passion and Tamarillo fruits well displayed on a gummy bag this evening. The human traffic in this narrow Alley becomes busy in the evening, with passengers from the Upcountry bus stage passing through this alley as they hurry to get a connecting Matatu to their homes. To create a rapport with Baba Simon, I bought the Passion fruits with Tamarillo and engaged him in a discussion. Purchasing an item from the vendor is important because the informal traders are always suspicious of being an officer in the Thika sub-county, a criminal investigation officer (CID), or a journalist working in one of the media houses in Kenya. Therefore, at first, he looks at the researcher suspiciously before engaging him. As our discussion continues, customers buying passion fruits occasionally distract us. I allow him to sell his products to his clients, whose frequency increases with time.

*I inquired about how he started the business.... immediately after I cleared form 4 in 2010, my parents were unable to enroll me in a college, and therefore decided to relocate to Thika town and work as a casual labourer at construction sites (Popularly known as Kazi ya mjengo in Swahili). I rented a one-bedroom house at Witeithie estate about 6km from Thika town. Then two years later, I had to quit the construction work as it was not very promising, and I could not fully support my family. I boldly decided to go back to my village (Rwegetha-Gatanga) and try farming on ¼ of an acre piece of land given to me as part of my inheritance from my Dad.*

*Then I asked him inquisitively.....so did you start growing Passion fruits. No, he explained. I started growing tomatoes and cabbages, later selling them in Thika, and realized this was sustainable. Later I tried some passion fruits, and it was from here that we discovered that the fruits were doing well in Thika. Then I decided to grow them while getting extra supplies from another farmer, Peter, as the demand was rising. Upon realizing that the business in Thika was good, my wife joined me and could now do it. One would remain on the farm while the other could go to the streets of Thika to sell the passion fruits. The proceeds from the passion fruits were good, and we decided to expand the space under passion fruits farming. Unfortunately, my farm could only accommodate 100 seedlings of passion fruits. To expand the area under passion fruit, I bought a 2-Acre plot at Matuu after some directions from an old friend. By that time, the price of the land in the area was going to Kshs. 250,000/-(€1923.26) for the two Acres. The conversation continues until 9:30 pm when he starts packing his remaining products to go home.*

We exchanged contacts and agreed to meet at his home in Rwegetha (Gatanga) so that I could visit his farm sometime in August.

On the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019, I took a Matatu at the Thika stage. I headed to Gatanga, Rwegetha Village, via the Thika-Gatura Road, a distance of 28km to the Rwegetha shopping Centre. Gatanga is a hinterland of Thika town though it is in Murang'a County. Gatanga is known for various reasons: the home of popular Kikuyu musicians. Over 40 prominent musicians from several villages of Gatanga have become popular, especially for their songs in Gikuyu. The second famous aspect known about Gatanga is that it is the home to Ndakaini Dam, a 63-meter-high dam on the Thika River with an impounding capacity of 70 million cubic meters. It is one of the main water suppliers to the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi. Gatanga constituency, about 25km from Thika, is famous for agricultural activities, e.g., the growing of cash crops such as coffee macadamia, Avocadoes, and arrowroots. Most of the farmers in this constituency mainly sell their products in the nearby markets or sometimes sell their goods in Thika town. Those who are unable to transport their goods sell through brokers and intermediaries.

On this day, his wife was the one who was selling the fruits in the streets of Thika, and therefore she had left early in the morning to get some additional supplies from some farmers in the area. Mr. John took me to the farm of Mr. Peter Gathungu, who has planted passion fruits on ½ an acre of land. Peter has always supplemented Baba Simon's supply of passion fruits when he doesn't have enough. Peter is a farmer who grows other types of crops apart from passion Fruits. Baba Simon says he has been in the business since 2012 and he is no longer interested in formal employment. He says that with the acquisition of the two-acre plot at Matuu, he can now increase his supplies in the streets of Thika.

Finally, we get into his home and take him around the farm. The homestead has five households, three of which belong to his elder brothers and the other to his parents. The whole farm has been divided into five portions according to the households. His piece of land is a narrow strip that goes down a steep slope and is bordered by the neighbors by a seasonal stream. During this particular season, the stream was dry; therefore, he has a water pan where he stores some tap water. He has to store tap water in a water pan because it is unreliable, and Murang'a County is

against any form of irrigation of crops using tap water. The water is also rationed, meaning that he gets the water once a week. He explains this with anger... *I wonder why the County of Murang'a cannot allow us to irrigate our farms with tap water. Yet, we have one of the biggest Dams (Ndakaini) in the country, which benefits only the "outsiders" (Nairobi). Why do our leaders only allow the Nairobians to get our water without limits while we are denied access to "our water?"*

He argues that their leaders have not been aggressive enough to push for the plan for Murang'a residents to have a share of their resources (in this case, the water resource). To supplement his water needs, he has drilled a borehole so that the whole piece of land can be irrigated when the water tank is full.

As we return to his homestead, he explains to me part of his achievements.....*from the proceeds of selling these fruits, I have been able to buy a cow where my family can get milk and sell the surplus when my cow delivers a calf in the next six months. In the next six months, I also bought chicken, which gives us eggs to supplement my income*

I finally asked Baba Simon why he preferred to go and sell his goods in Thika despite the local authorities being strict instead of going to Murang'a, where there is no harassment. The County Governor of Murang'a, Hon. Wairia Mwangi has allowed street vendors to trade freely, being the sponsor and author of the new bill "The Street Vendors Protection of Livelihood Bill, 2019". ..he laughs a bit before responding to my question...*Going to Murang'a town is like moving backward. I wonder about his response and calmly ask him ...Why?... He responds by saying.....you see any trader sell his products in Thika or Nairobi, going to sell in Murang'a, which is a small town, makes one feel like you are moving backward or you are not serious with business. I prefer to go to Thika, irrespective of the strict measures against street vendors. I only need to offer a bribe of Kshs.50/- to Kanju askaris (Local authority police) and will be allowed to continue with my business. The only warning is to stick to my trading area and not to move to another street or location within the town.*

He normally starts selling his products at 2 pm and goes up to 8 pm from Monday through Saturday. On a good day, he makes about Kshs5, 000/-(39 Euros), and during the low season, he

gets an income of approximately Kshs2 000/-(15.4 Euros). After spending almost 2 hours on his farm and homestead, I promise to visit his two-acre farm in Matuu on a later date.

As planned, I visited Baba Simon again on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020, this time at his Matuu farm. After picking a passenger service vehicle in Thika, I alighted at Sofia Township, about 55.5km. One has to pick a Motorcycle Taxi (popularly known as Boda Boda) to get to Baba Simon's farm, a distance that took us almost one hour because of the rugged terrain, rocky area, and poor road network. Along the way, one has to get off the Bodaboda and back to it due to poor roads in the area.

The area has two types of soils the black cotton soils in the valleys and the red soils in the highlands. Thickets have colonized the area as we go down to River Chania (flowing downstream from Thika town), which is used for irrigation by farmers. Before getting to Baba Simon's farm, he takes me on tour to his neighbor's farm in Kandara, Murang'a county. He is doing Tomato farming on a 6acres plot. The farmer had just harvested his crop and was preparing the farm for another season. In his explanations, Mr. John says that this farmer from Kandara decided to undertake tomato farming because of the ideal climatic conditions of Matuu that favours the crop. The farmer had invested a lot in irrigation from the Chania River, which allows farming to take place around the year.

Baba Simon has demarcated his 2 acres in the following way; one acre is dedicated to passion fruits,  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre for the planting of tomatoes which were still in the nursery bed then the other  $\frac{3}{4}$  of acre consists of the water pan that he prepared to store water, especially the rainy season, his house, the goat shed, and chicken. The sketch of his farm is shown in figure 7.

I asked him how he manages to work in Murang'a, Matuu, and Thika, to which he answered.....  
*It is easier for Murang'a farm, and my wife takes care of it when I'm in Matuu. Her only work is to water the crops in the morning during the dry season in Matuu. I spent more time in Matuu because the worker I had employed got another job on my neighbor's farm, which was paying much better. I had to employ another one, but he did not work well as expected, and that is why more time is spent in Matuu. Remember, I practice mixed farming, i.e., caring for passion fruits and other crops with ten goats and a chicken. My wife sells fruits in Thika, and I only assist*

*when she has some duties to perform at home. I spend 2-3 weeks in Matuu and then another week in Murang'a. The question of who cares for his farm and animals in Matuu while in Murang'a arises. He continues...I normally make arrangements with my neighbour to tether the goats in the part of the farm that is not under cultivation in the morning and give them water in the afternoon. Of course, I have to ensure there are other supplementary feeds for my goats and chicken when I'm not around.*

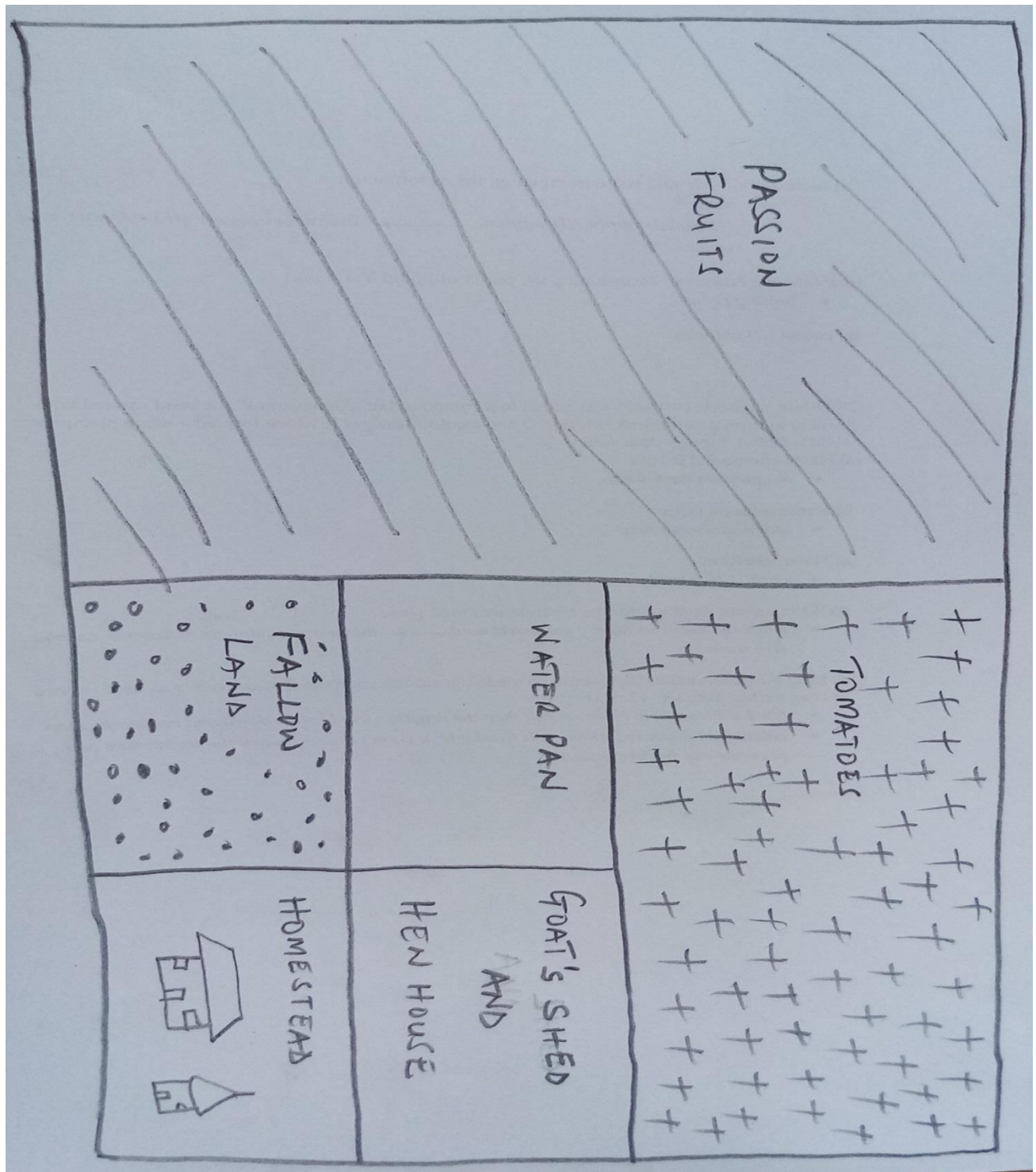
On issues of security of his Matuu home, he says that no one would dare steal from his farm when he is away because the area believes in a lot of black magic and sorcery. The beliefs are so real among the residents of Matuu that you can leave your house unattended, and nobody can break into it even for a whole year.

Baba Simon also sells goats and chicken (that he rears in Matuu) to earn a livelihood to sustain his family. Depending on customer demand and orders, he sells goats and chicken in Thika or Gatanga. A mature goat ready for slaughter in Matuu will cost Kshs. 5,000/- (38.81Euros), while in Thika, the same will retail for between Kshs14,000-16,000/-(108.68-124.20 Euros). The cost of transporting the goat to Thika or Gatanga can cost him around 100-200/-((0.78-1.55 Euros). Transport is not expensive to him and allows for the making of profits. Baba Simon concludes by saying that being a farmer and a street vendor has been rewarding to him because he has been able to pay school fees for his children and sustained his family's needs

(Source: Field notes 2020)

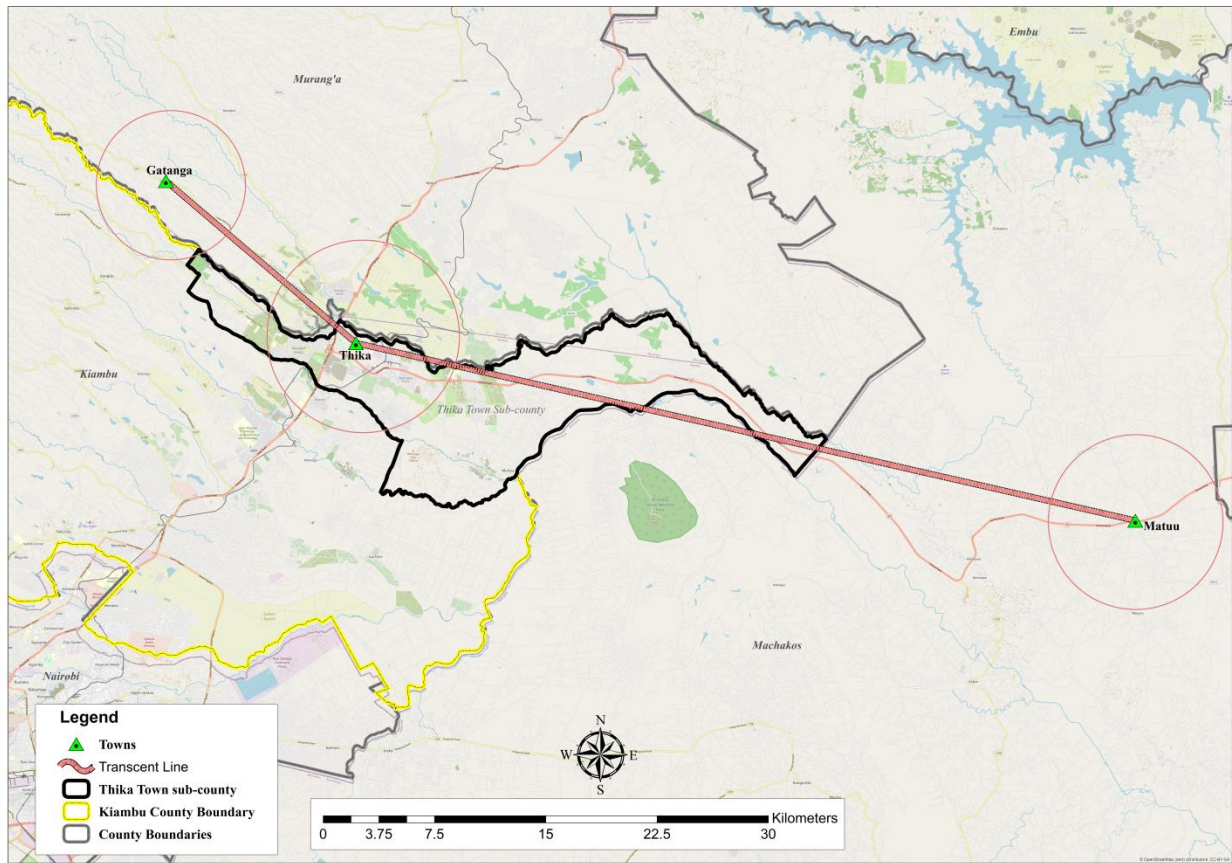


Figure 6 Baba Simon's Matuu Farm



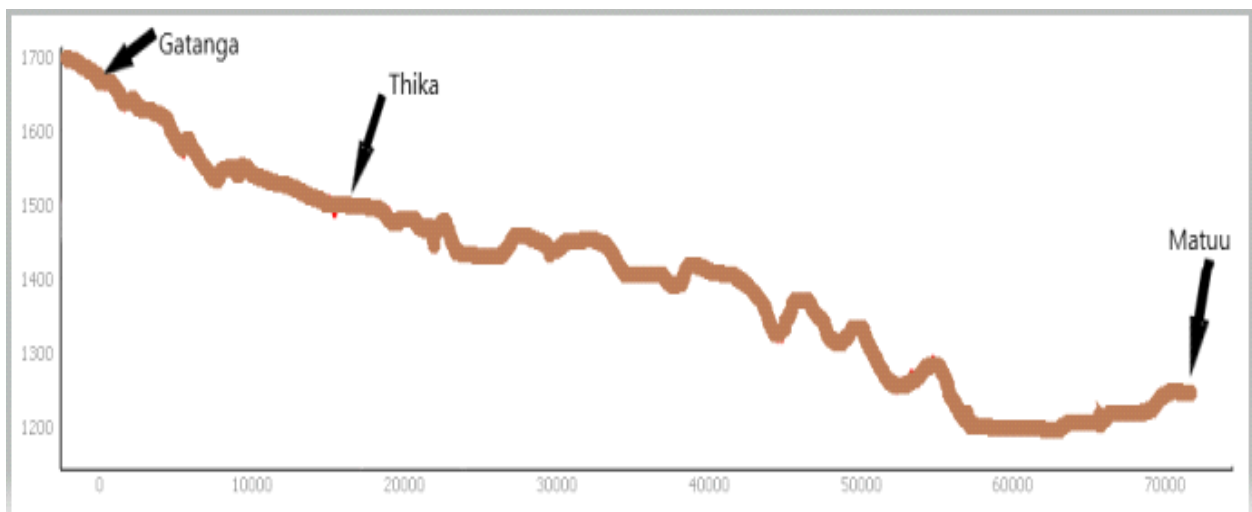
(Source: Authors Field notes 2020)

Map 12 Transect of Gatanga,Thika and Matuu towns



Source: Author (2022)

Figure 7 Cross section of Gatanga-Thika –Matuu



(Source: Author2022)

## 5.5 Flows of goods and vendors from formal markets in Thika

There are 16 formal markets in Thika Sub-county spread across its 9 Wards, as shown in Table 9. Some of the most important markets in Thika town are Mukiriti (Moi), Jamhuri, and Makongeni (Madaraka) Markets, especially regarding customers' and traders' frequency. All three markets specialize in different products located in different parts of Thika, as shown on map 13.

*Table 9 Formal Markets in Thika Sub-County*

Sub county	Ward	Name of the market	Market Status
Thika	Theta	Ndarasha	Temporary Open Air Market
	Theta	Junction	Temporary Open Air Market
	Murera	Toll	Temporary Open Air Market
	Murera	Pipeline	Temporary Open Air Market
	Murera	GSU	Temporary Open Air Market
	Kalimoni	Juja Farm	Temporary Open Air Market
	Kalimoni	Athi Market	Temporary Open Air Market
	Witeithie	Muthara	Temporary Open Air Market
	Witeithie	Athena	Temporary Open Air Market
	Township	Kiandutu	Open air market
	Hospital	Moi Market	Permanent
	Hospital	Jamhuri	Permanent
	Hospital	Wanyua	Permanent
	Ngoliba	Ngoliba	Open Air
	Kamenu	Madaraka	Permanent
	Gatuanyaga	Munyu	Permanent

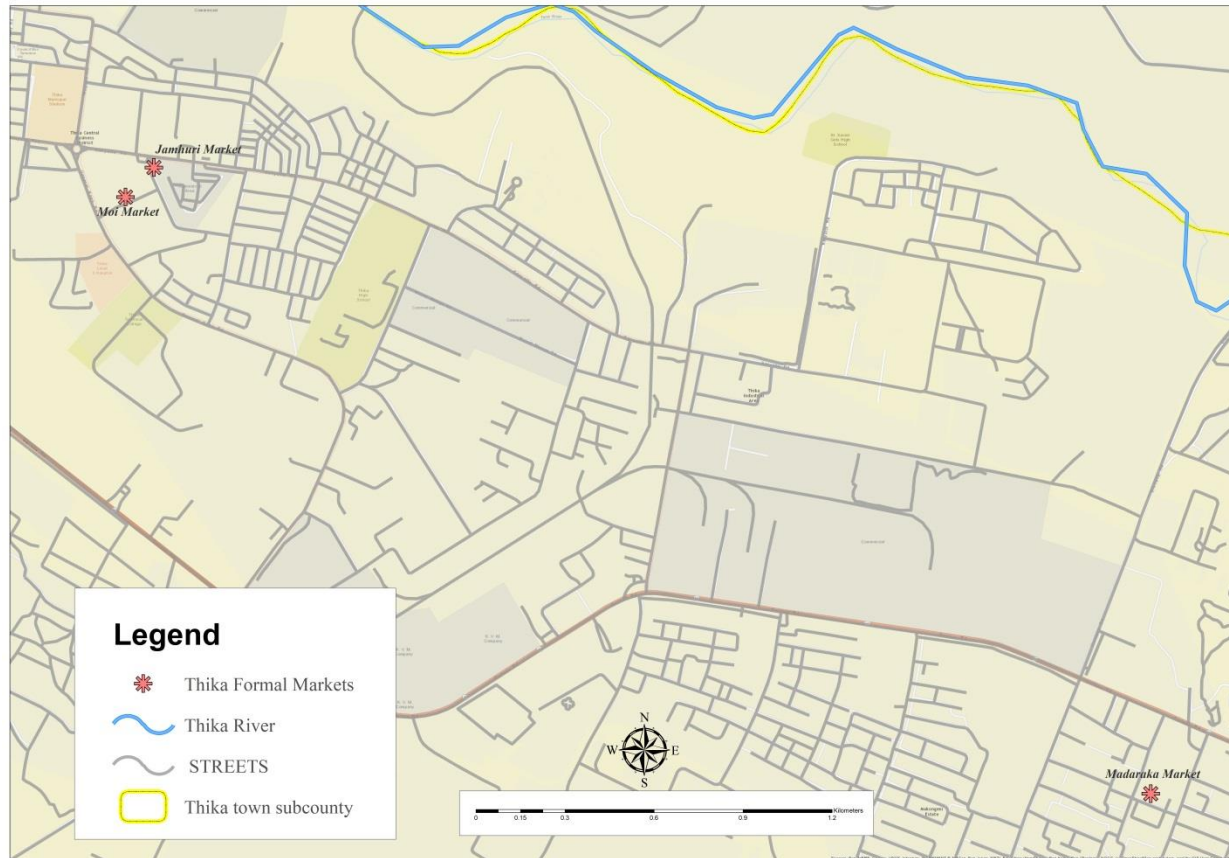
(Source: ISUDP 2015)

Moi Market sells second-hand clothes and shoes; Jamhuri market, on the other hand, sells cereals/grains, while Madaraka (Makongeni) Market sells fresh foods, especially vegetables and fruits. Though these Formal markets exist in Thika and attract many customers during the day, informal trading in Thika has taken center stage and therefore introduced the concept of a hybrid economy. There seems to be an interface between Thika's formal and informal economy. The same players driving the formal economy in formal markets are those involved in the informal



sector. The difference is only a matter of space and time, especially because formal markets operate during the day and informal during the evening when local authorities have closed for the day

*Map 13 Location of Jamhuri, Moi, and Madaraka formal Markets in Thika*



(Source: Author 2022)

### 5.5.1 Moi Market

The market was an open field, initially called Moi gardens, but the locals called it Mukiriti, a Gikuyu name for a dumping site. It was handed over as a market to the municipal council of Thika by the second president of Kenya, the late Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, during his

development tours and the famous roadside declarations. According to Johnny,<sup>63</sup> a journalist in Thika town, says...

*The market was named after the late president-Moi Market, and was supposed to be occupied by street vendors who used to hawk their goods in Thika's CBD.*

*Unfortunately, the then-influential personnel working for the defunct Thika Municipal council appropriated most of the prime areas. The prime areas are spaces along Kenyatta Highway, while the ordinary hawkers got the backside of the market far from the Highway.*

Mr. John's statement is confirmed by a former surveyor in Thika Town, Mr. Mwangi, who was actually in charge of surveying the market. In protest of missing prime areas, most street vendors returned to the streets but have always been repulsed. Some of these street vendors settled along the Thika stadium perimeter wall. This market around the stadium is nicknamed Mukiriti B and extends up to the Thika Main stage.

Moi market is a formal market, as shown in photo 20, and is the nearest to the Thika CBD. The Market is bordered by General Kago road (up to St. Patrick's Catholic Church) to the western side, Kenyatta Highway on the north, and Kilifi road on the East (up to AIPCA church Thika) as seen on map 16. The market does not have a specific main gate, only several entry/exit points. One can get through the market at an alley between the vineyard hospital and Gaturi house along Kenyatta Highway. Second-hand shoe sellers who display their commodities to the margins of Kenyatta Highway characterize this entry. The 2<sup>nd</sup> entry is between Tamasha house and Kenol petrol station. This entry had been blocked, and it took the intervention of the market chairperson, the owner of the petrol station, and the local authorities to open the entry for the sake of the traders in the market. There are eight more entries along the General Kago Road to show the challenges of securing Moi Market.

According to the chairperson of the market, there are about 3,000 traders in the market. There are two sections in the market; permanent or lockable stalls and semi-permanent stalls. The local

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<sup>63</sup> interview on December 13, 2019

authorities allow individuals to construct their stalls though one has to pay for hiring the space from the sub-county authorities. The sub-county has also constructed some stalls through the CDF (Constituent Development Fund) kitty, specifically for those selling vegetables. The stalls constructed have innovatively been changed to selling second-hand clothes against the initial plan for vegetables. In an in-depth interview with the chairman of the market and Mr.Ndichu, the former secretary of the KENASVIT Thika Chapter, 80% of the traders deal with the sale of clothes and shoes (Both new and second-hand). Other items sold in the market include fresh vegetables, bags, and hardware items made by Jua kali artisans. There are also Kiosks and Hostels occupied mainly by students in tertiary colleges around the town.

A walk through the market, one realizes that the figure of 3,000 traders is on the higher side because fewer traders are observed. During the interview, the chairperson says most traders have slowly shifted back to the streets of Thika, especially in the evenings. The trend started in 2016 in the run-up to the general elections when most vendors from other towns invaded the streets of Thika. To counter this invasion from “foreign vendors,” most traders also went into the streets to compete with them. The initial attempt to demonstrate and chase them away did not bear fruit.

Many empty stalls are at the backside of the Moi Market, as shown in photos 21 and 22. While most of the stalls remain unoccupied, the owners (those who constructed them) are now hiring space in these stalls as warehouses for some street vendors who sell their products on the road and cannot take them home because of the distance. It is tiresome to keep taking your consignment home where their alternatives are at Moi Market. One of the Tuk-tuk drivers, Mr. Amos,<sup>64</sup> says ...

*Though most of the street vendors who come to sell in the evenings come from outside Thika, they do not necessarily carry their consignment of goods daily. Once they purchase their goods, most of them store them in some of the stalls in Mukiriti, which act as warehouses. Therefore, the owners of the unoccupied stalls at Mukiriti take advantage of these empty stalls to make an extra coin enabling them to pay the local authorities monthly rent.*

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<sup>64</sup> interview on 23/1/2020

*Photo 20 Part of the Moi Market*



(Source: Google Street view 2020)

There are two reasons why some of the stalls are unoccupied: -First, some are expensive to Purchase/hire, and therefore, street vendors cannot afford to pay rent. For a trader to purchase a

stall in Mukiriti, he needs approximately Kshs. 650,000 to Kshs. 900,000 (€ 5,087 to € 7,043), while to buy the piece of land on where to build, you need like between 350,000/- to 450,000/- (€ 2739 to € 3,521). These amounts of money are definitely beyond some of the street vendors in Thika, especially for those who are still new in the business. Most of the spaces and stalls belong to people allocated when the stalls were cheaper than the current rate. Most beneficiaries are also former local authorities, like the former Municipal Council of Thika counselors. In an interview with Mr. Nick<sup>65</sup> (the market chairperson), he says

*... one of the former Mayors got at least three plots and even more plots allocated to their friend. The officers in the Municipal council were able to allocate this land because of prior knowledge about the municipal council plans.*

An interview with a former surveyor in the planning department who surveyed the Moi market reveals that he was able to allocate one of the plots together with allocating another to his daughter. Mr. Njoroge (a trader in Mukiriti Market), who has rented a stall in Mukiriti Market, normally pays Kshs 10,000/- (77.68 Euros) per month for his stall. The rent paid varies according to negotiating or bargaining power with the stall owner, but generally, the rent ranges between Kshs 7,000/- to Kshs 10,000. In addition to the rent, one has to pay the annual license fee of Kshs 5,000/- under The Kiambu County Finance Act, 2018. It justifies why traders in Moi Market still go to the streets every evening instead of occupying some of these stalls. In an interview with Mr. Ndichu<sup>66</sup>, a former secretary of KENASVIT-Thika Chapter and a shoe seller at Mukiriti stalls says that....

*I had to buy a stall from my friend who was changing into another kind of business. I cannot disclose the total amount of money for the stall purchase but parted with the goodwill of Kshs 40,000/-(311.66 Euros). The amount paid for goodwill in it might be too high for any common street vendor without considering the amount for renting the stall and the license to the local authorities.*

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<sup>65</sup> Interview on 23/12/19

<sup>66</sup> Interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, a former secretary of KENASVIT-Thika Chapter



The second argument from the vendors who have moved back into the street is that most empty stalls are at the backside of the market. Therefore, it is not easy for customers to access them, bearing in mind insecurity in the market, especially in the evening. As described earlier, the Mukiriti market has more than 11 entry points, so maintaining security becomes a challenge. The prominent people in the now defunct Thika Municipal Council appropriated prime areas like those bordering Kenyatta highway and General Kago road. The stalls at the back of the market are less competitive, and some have even been vandalized, as seen in stall A in photo 20. Some stalls are still advertised for hire, like stall B in photo 20, while others have been hired as warehouses and churches, as shown in photo 21. The spaces hired for the warehouse show how inconspicuous street vendors can still use spaces to store their goods overnight

Some traders in Moi Market routinely have a different arrangement to sell their goods in the market during the day and then move to the streets in the evening. There are two reasons for this kind of arrangement; first, most customers will not want to visit the market in the evening because it may be insecure at night and, therefore, would prefer to buy on the streets where there is light and feel secure.

During an interview with one of the customers, Kalondu<sup>67</sup>, sys...

*“mimi siwezi kuenda mpaka soko la mukiriti kwa sababu ni mbali sana haswa wakati wa jioni, afadhali kununua vitu kwa barabara kwa sababu ni karibu na stage ya magari ya kwetu. Sababu nyingine ni kwamba wakati wa jioni hakuna usalama ndani ya soko la mukiriti juu ya giza sehemu nyingi....”*

I cannot go to Mukiriti market because it is very far away, especially in the evening; better to buy the goods on the streets. After all, it is near where I pick up my buses to go home. Another reason is that during the evenings, the security in the market may be compromised due to lack of light in some parts of the market

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<sup>67</sup> Kalondu lives in Makongeni Estate interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020

*Photo 21 Stalls at Moi Market*



Stall A (empty vandalized stall)

Stall B (More space for hire in Moi Market)

(Source: Author 2020)

*Photo 22 Stalls used in the storage of goods-One is being used as a church*



(Source: Author 2020)

Secondly, most traders may want to profit more by selling for longer hours in the market and on the streets. The feeling is that street vendors from other towns who appropriate streets in the evening will make more profits, whereas majorities are “foreigners.” Therefore, Mukiriti traders not only move to the streets to profit more from the evening commuters who are going home but also compete with incoming “foreign vendors.” The movement of traders from formal markets to

the streets is not new; Babere (2013) narrates how traders from Machinga formal market (in Dar es Salaam) appropriate prime areas in the evening along Msimbazi/Uhuru road. The traders take advantage of customers' movements as they travel back to their places of residence.

The Regional Principal County administrator Mr. Christopher Wanjau<sup>68</sup> further explains the issue of Moi market traders appropriating prime spaces in the streets every evening. He is quoted when trying to cool down Moi market traders, as shown in photo 23, who were demonstrating against the street vendors from other towns or "Foreign street vendors"...

"... Majority of the hawkers who form about 80% who are causing us problems in town are the same ones operating in Moi Market. These people will be appropriating the spaces here in the evening selling their products," he said. "There are plans to construct modern markets at Mukiriti market and another area within Thika town to address the issues of informal traders,"

### **Inconspicuous spaces at Mukiriti Market**

While some traders have relocated to the streets of Thika from the Mukiriti market, there are still a lot of spaces in this market that are very important. As mentioned earlier, some empty stalls are used as warehouses or storage for street vendors who find it very inconvenient to carry their merchandise home

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<sup>68</sup> Regional Principal County Administrator Christopher Wanjau responding to Mukiriti traders and Thika residents on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 <https://www.thikatowntoday.co.ke/2018/06/police-lob-teargas-to-disperse.html> -Accessed on 30/10/2019



*Photo 23 Mukiriti traders protesting against the invasion of Street vendors*



(Source: Ng'ang'a 2017)

Some of these empty stalls are owned by some traders and are used as security or collateral. A credit officer<sup>69</sup> at Faulu bank explains ...

*Some of the traders appropriating streets of Thika in the evenings normally have a stall at Mukiriti market. The stall act as collateral when applying for a loan in most Banks because it represents permanency. As credit officers, we must visit the trader's shop when processing bank loans. Therefore, they visit Mukiriti market stalls to appraise some of their customers before giving them a loan. For the*

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<sup>69</sup> Interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 at Faulu Bank-Thika Branch

*majority of these traders, one foot is normally at Moi Market to act as a symbol of permanency and acquire a loan, while another foot is on the streets of Thika, where real business takes place in the evening*

Some street vendors are college students who prefer to attend their classes during the day and sell their products in the evening on the streets of Thika. Most students have rented hostels in town, some located in the Moi Market. Hostels in the market are also noted by the chairperson of the market, Mr. Nick, and the Kiambu County inspectorate. On his part, the market chairperson is concerned about the security of the market when students live in this market space. It makes the market lose its meaning as a place where buyers and sellers meet. The chairperson, in addition, says...

*The other challenges for the market have been the illegal construction of hostels within the market. Most hostels in the market are occupied by students from local universities and colleges who are also involved in street trading. The sewage system in the market cannot accommodate the surging population of people living in these hostels. There have been frequent sewage blockages in the recent past. Security of people's goods cannot be assured, especially at night when people are accommodated in the market. The market does not have any specific gate, so one has to arrange for security, especially those with stalls. Similarly, those with hostels make their security arrangements.*

Margaret, a student at Thika technical training institute and a street vendor, agrees with the market chairperson that many college students live at Mukiriti market. Though Margaret was not lucky to secure a hostel in this market, she says most students find the place convenient due to its proximity to the colleges. Her house is at Kiganjo estate, about 5km from Thika town. At one point, she had to store some goods belonging to her friends who live in Mukiriti market hostels due to insecurity. Kiambu, County inspectorate<sup>70</sup> officer, notes that ...

*There is a problem in the Moi market where some landowners have constructed*

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<sup>70</sup> Interview on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

*hotels in the market against the County by-laws. The former Deputy Mayor did it with several market plots. The process of user change is already flawed; therefore, implementing the by-laws becomes tricky because of the politics involved. The majority of the hostels in the market are occupied by students in the universities around Thika who, in the evening, are also involved in street vending. Most of these students have managed to stay in these hostels in the Moi market because their vice-chancellor works hand in hand with some Kiambu County officials to maintain the hostels.*

### **5.5.2 Madaraka (Makongeni) Market**

Madaraka, also known as Makongeni market, is about 4km from Thika's CBD and sits on a 33-acre piece of land in the eastern part of Thika along the Thika Garissa Highway (as shown on map 15). As noted in the earlier chapters, it is famous for selling fresh foods, especially vegetables, fruits, onions, and potatoes. In an interview with James Ng'ang'a,<sup>71</sup> a blogger with Thika Today says that the market was started due to excess traders at Jamhuri market in Thika town. The excess traders migrated to the Madaraka market. The market chairperson, Mr. Ephantus Ngare, says that the market developed from a Bus station for the passenger vehicles that were plying the Thika-Garissa route. Photo 23 shows evidence of the remains of passenger waiting Bays to indicate that this market was formerly a bus station. Thika Sub-county government could not recognize it as a market but as a bus station. As Pierre (2017) noted, the sub-county could not allocate finances to this market for other infrastructural development because it was still considered a Bus station in their plans. The photo shows that the traders have converted the passengers waiting for bays into shops and places where products are displayed. It is a perfect example of how inconspicuous spaces can be utilized as a trading site

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<sup>71</sup> Interview on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019

*Photo 24 Madaraka market, formerly a bus station*



(Source: Pierre 2017)

Later after the 2017 elections, the then Governor Waititu allowed the traders to continue with their business officially as Madaraka market, and he allocated another land beside it as the bus station, as can be seen in Google map 15

Since its inception in 1992 Madaraka/Makongeni market has always been seen as an alternative to most traders who used to go to Wakulima market in Nairobi every day. Most traders in the streets of Thika dealing with selling fresh foods get their supply from the Madaraka market. Currently, the market has over 5,000 traders and 50-50% in terms of gender. Madaraka market has been known to receive goods from Tanzania and the entire western part of Kenya while distributing the same as far as Somali, Central, Eastern, and North Eastern parts of Kenya. Jamhuri market, on the other hand, receives cereals from Ethiopia, Burundi, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda, including fundamental parts of Western Kenya, and then distributes them to central, Eastern, North Eastern parts of Kenya and even Somalia. According to the chairman of the Market, Mr.Ngare<sup>72</sup>...

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<sup>72</sup> interviewed on 17<sup>th</sup> March2020



*Madaraka is normally a wholesale market, but the traders also sell retail depending on the customer's demand. Lorries from various parts of the country supply goods to the market at night or early in the morning. The charge for Lorries that gets into the market is between Kshs.600-800 (4.68-6.25Euros). I normally sell cabbages, which are distributed, to northern Kenya, especially in Garissa and as far as Wajir, especially when supplying food to troops of Kenya in Somalia. We also sell our products as far as Meru, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Ukambani, and Embu.*

The market gets supplies of goods from as far as Lamu and other parts of the country. Mr. Ngare believes that Madaraka is the biggest open-air market in the East African region, even bigger than the Karatina market. He says that 80% of the traders in the market are not from Thika but have now settled in the town. It shows flows of goods and people from the hinterland and even in the East African country like Somali being served from Thika.

Most traders who sell fresh food products in Thika's CBD, especially in the evenings, get their supplies from the Madaraka market. Street vendors are allowed to sell near and even inside the market, irrespective of the goods. According to the chairperson, it is a way of creating jobs for young people who do not have huge capital to engage in wholesaling. It is quite different from the Jamuhuri market, where the administration does not allow hawkers in the market.

Cooking and smoking are prohibited in the market to avoid the dangers of fires like the one which destroyed it on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2015, with about 5,000 traders losing their merchandise. It was alleged that there were plans to evict the traders in this market. These unfortunate events have had some implications on the street vending in the streets of Thika because when these traders are destabilized, they go back to the Central Business District. In the case of the fire that gutted down the market, the chairperson fully puts his blame on the former regime for allegedly trying to force traders out of this space. Fortunately, the former MP of Thika town, Hon. Alice Ng'ang'a, together with former Governor Hon. Waititu assisted the traders in "reclaiming" back the market.

Map 14 Location of Madaraka/Makongeni Market



(Source: Google Maps 2020)

It is not the only market that has faced the challenges of being burned down. The relocation of Jua kali artisans from town was marked by many battles between the traders and the municipal council of Thika, as explained by the current TBDA chairperson. It took the intervention of the police to settle the traders in their current location. The market has experienced arson attacks that burnt it down three times and the most recent one being on Sunday 16th October 2016

The chairperson notes that some of their main challenges include a lack of proper lighting, drainage, lavatories, and fencing, which were demolished during the 2015 arson attack. Piped water in the market is a challenge forcing traders to buy from water vendors, which is quite expensive. Water is an essential commodity for cleaning their products for a market dealing with fresh foods.

One of the street vendors, Margaret<sup>73</sup>, who deals with the peddling of fruit pudding, says that she now finds it cheap and easier to go to Madaraka market every Tuesday and Thursday morning to get her supplies. Margaret has been in the business since 2018 and is undertaking her Diploma course in Food science at Thika Technical Training Institute. She started her business immediately after completing her Form 4 and moved to Thika from the neighboring sub-county of Ruiru. The business is used to pay her college fees. She narrates her journey to get products from Makongeni Market.

*“...I go to Makongeni to get my fruits suppliers at least twice a week, and it is worth it because the transport cost is low, unlike probably going to wakulima in Nairobi or Ruiru Market. I live in Kiganjo Thika and pass by the market on my way to Thika. I must be at the market before 6:30 am to get the fruits when they are still fresh. Secondly, it also gives me ample time to prepare the pudding before supplying them between 8-10 am. After supplying the pudding, I attend my classes at Thika Technical Training Institute. Normally my lessons end at around 5 pm. I go round collecting the money from my clients” who are mainly located in Thika’s CBD, at the Kenya power and lighting company depot that is opposite the Thika*

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<sup>73</sup> interview on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020

*level5 hospital, Staff at Thika police station, lecturers at the Thika Technical Training Institute and mechanics along Kilifi road which borders Mukiriti Market.*

The story is the same for Daniel<sup>74</sup>, a Sugar Cane-Juice vendor who sells his juice along the stadium wall in a semi-structured stall. He rarely goes to Nairobi to get his supplies to prepare the fruit juice. Normally, he goes to Makongeni market to get all his supplies, which include; Ginger, lemon, aloe Vera and sugarcane stalks. He says that the best sugar cane stalks come from Kisii town in western Kenya and get the deliveries through Makongeni Market. He says that the Market saves him a lot because it is near Thika Town compared to going to Githurai or sometimes to Wakulima market in Nairobi. In his case, he can work throughout the day and even in the evening because of a license from the Thika sub-county, which is renewable annually. To make the juice, he can prepare it using Ginger, lemon, and aloe Vera and squeezes it together with the sugarcane depending on the customer's taste. Daniel describes the preparation of his Sugar cane juice...

*One-meter sugarcane can give about 4 liters of juice. On a good day, I can produce about 25litres. A 250ml Cup of juice can go for Kshs 50, and therefore 1litre can go for Kshs.200. Therefore, if a one-meter-long cane can produce 4 liters, I get approximately Kshs 800 considering one cane goes for Kshs 30/- in the market. The juice is processed while the customer waits because it must be consumed while fresh. If prepared earlier and kept for a long, it changes its colour in a short time because it is alkaline and therefore not good for consumption.*

Boniface Omuya, a street vendor selling groundnuts, normally gets his supplies from Jamhuri market and sells them along Commercial Street. He lives in Makongeni and finds it easier to get his supplies from the Madaraka market in his neighborhood. He has been in this business for nearly 2.5 years and was convinced to get into this business by his wife. Initially, Boniface worked as a night guard at Thika Arcade before quitting and getting into street vending. His wife

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<sup>74</sup> interview on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019



has also been doing the same kind of business and was profitable, making it easier to convince Boniface.

### **5.5.3 Jamhuri Market**

It is the third most important market as far as goods sold on Thika's streets are concerned. It is located near Mukiriti Market, as seen on Map 16. It specializes in selling cereals and grains though other products are sold on a smaller scale. The market receives a majority of its grains from as far as Ethiopia (Beans & Maize), Malawi (Groundnuts), Burundi & Uganda (Beans), and Western Kenya/North Rift (Maize).

*Photo 25 Jamhuri Market*



(Source: Author 2020)

*Map 15 Location of Mukiriti and Jamhuri Market with Thika's CBD*



(Source: Google Maps 2022)

Most of the stalls in this market are permanent, and one has to hire at the sub-county authorities and renew his license annually. The market has only one entry; therefore, trading activities are carried out during the day, meaning it is impossible to undertake business at night. Unlike the other markets in the town, the Jamhuri market has most of the infrastructures provided by the local authorities, such as water and sewerage facilities.

One of the common features that one observes as one enters the market is transporters are offloading cereals and grains from trucks coming from various parts of the country. The market is more wholesale, especially to retailers buying cereals and grains to sell in the estates or the various parts of the country, especially the Northeastern parts. Mr.Njenga<sup>75</sup>, a trader from Bushi town in Nyandarua, says...

*I come to Jamhuri market to get the cereals because Nyandarua does not produce many kinds of cereal in the highlands. I supply potatoes, cabbages, and carrots to Thika town and, in exchange, carry lots of cereals to the highland town of Bushi*

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<sup>75</sup> Interview conducted with Mr.Jenga on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

*in Nyandarua County.*

The above is a perfect example of the linkages between the mountains and the secondary towns. In Jamhuri market, Wakamau<sup>76</sup> (her shop shown in photo 24) has been supplying a variety of groundnuts from Malawi for the last 5 years. Her customers are always in two categories, i.e., the large and the small-scale traders. The latter is mainly the hawkers who sell their groundnuts around the streets of Thika town. Among the large-scale customers are those she supplies to Garissa, Hola in Tana-River, Ishiara in Embu, and some in Gatundu -Kiambu. She used to have some customers as far as Mombasa but lost them to another supplier ferrying the goods directly to them from Namanga town Bordering Tanzania.

On the question of who is the preferred customer between the two categories, she states street vendors because their turnover is quite high compared to large-scale customers. She elucidates her answers in Swahili...

*“.... mimi napenda kuuzia njugu hawa hawkers wa Thika kwa sababu wao huwa wanakuja kununua karibu kila siku. Kwa mfano mimi huwa nawauzia zaidi ya kilo sitini za njugu kila wiki hiyo ni zaidi ya kilo mia mbili na arobaine kwa mwezi. Wale wanabiashara wakubwa hununua kilo mia moja baada ya wiki mbili hivyo ni kama kilo mia mbili peke yake kwa mwezi...”*

I like selling my groundnuts to street vendors in Thika because they come almost daily. For example, I sell them more than 60kg of groundnuts weekly, which makes 240kg per month. The large-scale traders buy 100kg after every two weeks totaling about 200kgs per month

From her interview, we meet a street vendor Jean who has come to get more supplies from the Wakamau's shop. Jean started selling groundnuts in Thika in 2018 at the junction of Commercial Street and Stadium road near White-line hotel. He says that he has always been getting his supplies from Wakamau because of the quality of her groundnuts and fair prices. He says he normally buys 5kg and sells the whole of it in a day, especially when their business is not

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<sup>76</sup> A groundnut wholesaler based in Jamhuri market- an interview conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> march 2020



interrupted by the local authority's police. Taking into consideration that he sells from Monday to Saturday, it means that he can sell 30kgs in a week. When considered per month, this can translate to 120kgs per month. On that same street, i.e., Stadium road, there are approximately ten other vendors selling groundnuts meaning that they sell approximately 5kgs per day. Most of these street vendors operate six days a week which translates to 300kg per week and 1,200kg per month. This amount of groundnuts sold by street vendors per week shows their contribution to consumer merchandise distribution. It is quite a lot considering that the main supplies come from Jamhuri Market. Apart from Commercial Street and Stadium road, the groundnut vendors are spread over other streets like Kenyatta Highway near the Absa Bank and Posta lane.

*Photo 26 Wakamau's Groundnut Stall at Jamhuri market*





## 5.6 Summary of the chapter

The chapter focused on the flow of goods, people, and information from the Nairobi metropolis to the rural areas through the secondary town. Thika's CBD has been described in terms of the main installations, like the main streets, supermarkets, and the two main gardens, Christina and Mama-Ngina Garden. The main Matatu stages have been highlighted because it is from here that journeys by commuters either start or end. These are important points for the movement of goods and people.

All the major streets have also been mapped out, including the kind of goods that the street vendors popularly sell during the day and evening. The most popular products observed during data collection include second-hand clothes/Shoes and fruits/Vegetables. It is important because some streets are specialized with different types of goods based on the time of the day and the location of the street. The Flows of goods from Nairobi have been described together with the main types of goods that come from the four major markets associated with street vendors such as Gikomba (Second-hand clothes and shoes), Eastleigh (New clothes and shoes), Kamukunji (Household items) and Wakulima market (Vegetables). These flows frequently occur between 5 pm and 6 pm onwards, especially when the local authorities have closed their daily operations. Coincidentally this is when people leave their places of work and go back home. Most street vendors from Nairobi noted that Thika was their preferred destination because of less harassment by the County council law enforcers, stiff competition in Nairobi, and high profitability. The completion of the Thika superhighway made the accessibility to Thika town easy and faster from the capital Nairobi.

The flows from the hinterlands have been highlighted together with the product associated with each area. These areas include Matuu, known for the supply of passion fruits and tomatoes, while Gatanga and Kandara are associated with the supply of vegetables and passion fruits. A bibliography of a farmer cum a street vendor has shown how individuals can earn livelihoods both as a farmer and a street vendor. It shows the kind of complementarity between agriculture and trade.

The last section of the chapter focused on the flow of goods within the formal markets of Thika. It was noted that 16 markets are registered in the town, with four being permanent. The three most popular street vendors are Moi market (popular with second-hand clothes and shoes), Jamhuri market (Popular with cereals and grains), and Madaraka Market (Popular for fresh vegetables and fruits). The most interesting aspect is how street vendors in some of these markets have learned the art of operating in both spaces between different times of the day. It means that the urge to trade in the two spaces might be because of increasing profitability and to compete with what they refer to as “foreign traders.”



## **Chapter 6-Governance, Vending Flows, and Metropolisation**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This research revolves around how street vending flows have created linkages between secondary towns, rural areas, metropolis areas, and even beyond international boundaries. The street vendors have innovatively created their own spaces in the urban area to earn livelihoods. The vendors have appropriated spaces at different times and utilized them to make a living despite the many challenges associated with the process. The appropriation of space has elicited different reactions from various actors, especially in urban areas.

The movement of street vendors together with their goods has not only linked cities but also created a hybrid economy between the formal and informal. The flows have connected the agricultural sector and manufactured goods and have influenced political interplay within the study area. The flow has influenced the actors' social aspects, including improving their social status and creating social capital—the interaction between formal and informal institutions. The hybrid economy is highlighted as the implications of regulation and policy framework. Then finally, the various types of linkages make Metropolisation from below possible.

### **6.2 Governance of urban spaces in Thika**

Like any other urban area, the spaces in Thika town are important for street vendors who use them to earn their livelihoods in the face of increasing poverty (Asiedu and Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Lyons et al., 2012; Moreno-Monroy, 2012). The space is also used for communal activities or as a channel for movement (Brown and Lloyd-Jones, 2002; Brown, 2006). The governance of urban spaces has been left to the hands of the Sub-County government of Thika though other actors are also involved in one way or the other. In collaboration with politicians, some street vendor associations have played a crucial role in settling their members to specific sites and negotiating for trading time and sites. A good example is the Thika Town hawker's welfare association, which has negotiated for its members to be settled along the Municipal stadium wall after many years of harassment and evictions.

The Sub-County government of Thika has used various ways to govern spaces within Thika town. These ways have been adapted at different times and sometimes simultaneously, for example:-

- (i) The construction of modern markets
- (ii) Demarcating various areas for formal trading activities
- (iii) Permitting temporary usage of some areas for vending activities and
- (iv) Allowing informal trading activities at a given time.

These arrangements are similar to what Babere (2017) described in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; the categorization here is referred to as spatial and in-time arrangements. Some of these strategies have been experimented with in other cities but with different outcomes.

### **6.2.1 Construction of Modern markets**

The construction of modern markets in Kiambu County to formalize urban areas of informal activities might have been borrowed from the Muthurwa market in Nairobi. President Kibaki's decree on Muthurwa (6.6 acres in size) in December 2006 to make it a market for informal trades was valuable at that time because of its proximity to the CBD and an area of high pedestrian traffic (Kamunyoru 2007). The idea was to reduce the number of informal traders on the streets of Nairobi by settling them in one area and formalizing their activities at Muthurwa Market. The county government of Kiambu also did the same by targeting the construction of eight markets within Kiambu, which include Gatundu, Limuru, Ruiru, Githurai, Kikuyu, Kihara, Thika, and Juja, as shown in Table 10. Dewar and Watson (1990) contend that city market construction has great potential to benefit many informal traders spread within an urban space. The construction of these markets in Kiambu has been done through partnerships between the county government of Kiambu and the Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement Project (NaMSIP), which is a World Bank funded Project under the State Department of Nairobi Metropolitan Region in the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, and Urban Development.

Apart from Kiambu County, other beneficiaries within Nairobi metropolitan areas include Nairobi County-Along Jogoo road, Karandini, Mwariri, and Muthurwa: Kajiado county-Kitengela, Ngong and Ongata Rongai and lastly in Machakos county the market at Tala Town

Table 10 World bank funded modern markets

	Market	Location	Location (County)
1.	Jogoo Road	Nairobi city along Jogoo road	Nairobi
2.	Karandini	Nairobi city near Dagoretti Corner on the western side of the intersection of Ngong Road and Naivasha Road	
3.	Mwariro	Nairobi near Kariakor	
4.	Muthurwa	Nairobi City, Off Haile Selassie Avenue	
5.	Thika (Madaraka)	Thika, Makongeni area along Garissa Road	Kiambu
6.	Juja	Juja Town near Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology	
7.	Ruiru	<b>Along Kamiti road in Ruiru Town</b>	
8.	Githurai	Githurai town along the Thika Super Highway next to Githurai Bus stop	
9.	Kiambu	Kiambu town along Biashara Road	
10.	Kihara	In Kihara town, along Kihara - Gachie-Karura Road	
11.	Kikuyu	Kikuyu town, near Kikuyu-Nairobi market	
12.	Kitengela	Off Nairobi Namanga Road in Kitengela town behind the Kobil petrol station	Kajiado
13.	Ngong	Ngong Town near Ngong bus terminus	
14.	Ongata Rongai (Ole Kasasi)	Ole Kasasi, Rongai area near Maasai Lodge, Off the main Magadi Road	
15.	Tala	Tala Town	Machakos

NaMSIP Environmental and social impact assessment report (ESIA) (2018)

Apart from Kiambu county, other cities in the world that have constructed markets to provide working spaces for informal traders include Lagos, Mexico, Durban, Johannesburg, Lusaka, Accra, and Dar es Salaam. As a method of regulating spaces in urban spaces, the construction of markets has had its share of challenges. Most street vendors meant to occupy those spaces have always returned to the streets, leaving empty spaces in the modern markets. Robert<sup>77</sup>, one of the street vendors who still sells at Juja market, says...

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<sup>77</sup> Trader at Juja modern Market, interview on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021

*Most spaces remain empty because customers find this market far from human traffic, and the process of procuring spaces is corrupted. The people who deserved these spaces were denied and were given to “outsiders” who were known by the county officials. When the people realized that they were cheated on the allocation of spaces; they went back to the streets, leaving many unoccupied spaces in the new market*

Moving the markets away from the CBD reduces the number of customers who accesses these localities, which forces the street vendors to find their way back to their initial trading area. The county government seems determined to continue with the construction of these markets as a way of creating spaces for informal traders. Examples of traders avoiding such markets even after construction have also been experienced elsewhere. For example, in Dar es Salaam, Babere (2017) notes that Machinga Complex Mall was intended to accommodate 10,000 informal operators; to date, it has only 4,000, a shortfall of more than half the numbers expected. A similar scenario is seen at the new Juja Market, as shown in Photo 27

*Photo 27 Unoccupied spaces at New Juja Market*



(Source: Author 2021)

The process of allocating spaces on the newly constructed market is also why most traders find their way back to the street. If the process is not above board, street vendors find their way back

to the streets. In Lusaka, Hansen (2010) notes that corruption and lack of transparency in allocating street vendors in a newly constructed market forced some of them to return to the streets. The same happened to street vendors in Mexico City, where street vendors returned to the city after recording low profits in the markets built to accommodate the hawkers (Cross 1996). The city administrators had constructed 38 markets to accommodate 10,000 hawkers across Mexico City. By 1995 Cross (1996) notes that 28 out of the 38 markets built had a capacity of 20% occupancy because most of the vendors had gone back to the streets in the city.

Michael<sup>78</sup>, who trades at Ruiru modern market, says that most spaces in the market are only taken up during the market days, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The trading is done from morning until early afternoon before most traders shift to the streets of Thika. Further, Michael complains about the design of the market and prefers having shades rather than moving up and down the floors...

*We have always told the local government officials to consider the construction of shades rather than different floors because customers do not have time to move from one floor to another. We target commuters on their way home who will only buy from traders who sell their goods on the shades rather than on the top floor of some of these modern markets.*

This strategy of regulating urban spaces by constructing a formal market looks like the most preferred by the county government. Still, it has its challenges, especially with the hawkers returning to the streets to sell their items. The major undoing seems to entail issues like

- (i) Unfair distribution of spaces in this markets
- (ii) The long-distance between the new markets and areas where the customer is concentrated
- (iii) The design of the markets is an issue as some preferred the shades rather than storey buildings. Some traders would complain that there was a lack of comprehensive consultations before the designs of the markets were implemented. Where some

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<sup>78</sup> Trader at Ruiru modern Market, interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021



consultations were done, the implementation did not incorporate the opinions of the traders

- (iv) There are also cases where the stalls in the modern markets are fewer than the number of traders who are supposed to occupy them, like the case of the Muthurwa market in Nairobi. The stalls were supposed to accommodate 8,000 traders, while in 2013 when the physical counting was done, there were more than 12,000 stalls as hundreds of traders were obliged to set up stalls around the market (Morange 2015).

Amidst the challenges of the modern markets model, there have been some cities where achievements in this model have been observed. Baroni (2007) notes that Pino Suarez and Meaves public markets were among the places where street vendors agreed to remain after their relocation from the streets of Mexico City. Baron notes because of these successes; the government tried a similar project on a lower scale in 1998. The Warwick junction project in Durban, South Africa, as shown in photo 28, remains a success story in Africa where markets built according to vendors' input can work well (Robinson and Dobson, 2008)

*Photo 28 Durban's Warwick Junction*



The Warwick junction in South Africa is the preferred model by some street vendors since one doesn't have to keep on moving from one floor to another instead customers can conveniently access traders

(Source: Moriango 2017 and [www.https://google.com/search?q=warwick+junction](https://google.com/search?q=warwick+junction))

For the authorities in Thika town, it is yet to be seen how this strategy will work out in the long-run, as some hawkers are still occupying the streets in the evening. Some modern markets only become active on specific days and thus operate as periodic markets. The idea of having street vendors fill up the markets will take some more motivation to have them occupy some empty spaces that are still left in these modern markets.

### **6.2.2 Demarcating various areas for formal trading activities**

Apart from constructing modern markets, the Kiambu county government has demarcated some spaces where informal traders can undertake their businesses. Chapter four explains about 16 markets within Thika; five are permanent, including Moi, Jamhuri, Madaraka, Munyu, and Wanyua. Open-air markets include Ndarasha, Junction, Toll, Pipeline, GSU, Juja Farm, Athi, Muthara, Athena, Kiandutu, and Ngoliba.

The stalls in these markets have different rates depending on the space used. Those traders in the open market normally pay a daily fee of Kshs.20/- while those who are in permanent stalls, especially those in Jamhuri market and Moi market, pay an annual license of between Kshs.4,500 to 8,500/- depending on the size of their stalls. Due to Covid -19 pandemic, the county government waived the daily fee charges of Kshs.20/-. Most traders in these markets normally operate in the morning hours in their locations and move to Thika's CBD in the evening to take advantage of the evening traders. Bromley and Mackie (2009) note a similar behavior in Cusco, Peru, where traders would reoccupy the city center's streets after closing their market stalls in the evening.

This strategy of governing spaces using formal markets seems to have worked, especially in the morning, as most traders are contained in these markets. The evening flows into the streets of Thika town means that these markets are used as transitional zones before one venture into the streets.

### **6.2.3 Permitting temporary usage of some areas for vending activities**

The local authority of Thika also governs space by allowing temporary usage of some areas by informal traders. Examples of such areas include the perimeter wall of Thika Municipal stadium

along Kenyatta Highway and Spaces along Kisii streets for fruit sellers shown in photos 29A & 29B, respectively.

The spaces along the stadium wall (Photo 29 A) were negotiated between the street vendors association and politicians in the run-up to the 2017 general election. The space is temporary as the planning department did not do the allocation, according to the town planner<sup>79</sup> .

*This space, alongside the Thika Municipal stadium, is not reserved for trading activities. According to our plans, it is meant for a road reserve. Still, due to the negotiation between hawkers associations and the politicians in charge of the Sub-County, the street vendors appropriated it.*

The chairperson of the Stadium wall association, who is also the current chairperson of Thika Town vendors limited, admits that the traders might operate in the location temporarily depending on how the next regime that comes into power in the year 2022 will treat them. The chairperson fears the street vendors will have to get an alternative site if the regime is not “friendly” to them. The traders who sell fruits along Kisii Street have been temporarily allowed to do business and pay parking fees because of occupying the space for a whole day. Mkokoteni allows traders to be mobile and move to a different location when needed. Schlegel (2018) notes that “*although they do not have the property over the space they are trading and remain mobile, they benefit from the capacity of interaction with the local government.*”

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<sup>79</sup> interview on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020

*Photo 29 Temporary spaces for vending*



Spaces temporarily authorized at perimeter wall of Thika Municipal stadium that is along Kenyatta Highway (Source: Author 2020)



Spaces along Kisii Street for fruit sellers using Handcart, locally known as “Mkokoteni” (Source: Schlegel 2018)

#### **6.2.4 Allowing informal trading activities at different time intervals**

The last way local authorities regulate space in Thika has been by allowing street vendors to undertake their activities at different intervals. Before the mass invasion of street vendors from different towns in Thika, between 2016 and 2017 (Interviews from residents of Thika and TBDA), most informal trading was restricted in the formal markets. Street vending was on a

smaller scale and could be controlled easily, but with the upsurge in the activity in the recent past, the local authority seems to have lost control of the governance of urban space at CBD. Through a gentlemen's agreement with the governor, TBDA, and the local authority, the street vendors were allowed to be operating from 6 pm. The chairperson TBDA<sup>80</sup> reveals that...

*We agreed that the hawkers would be allowed to do their business from 6 pm onwards immediately after the formal traders close their business for the day. These are still our sons and daughters, and instead of them engaging in criminal activities, they should get a livelihood from selling in the streets, provided they sell within the agreed time of 6 pm.*

The local authority seems to agree with the arrangements and tolerate vending activities in the evening. The working hours were altered in favour of street vendors, especially during the curfew hours brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. When the curfew hours were adjusted to 7 pm, the street vendors were allowed to start their operations as early as 4 pm. It allowed them to earn a living in the difficult times of Covid-19.

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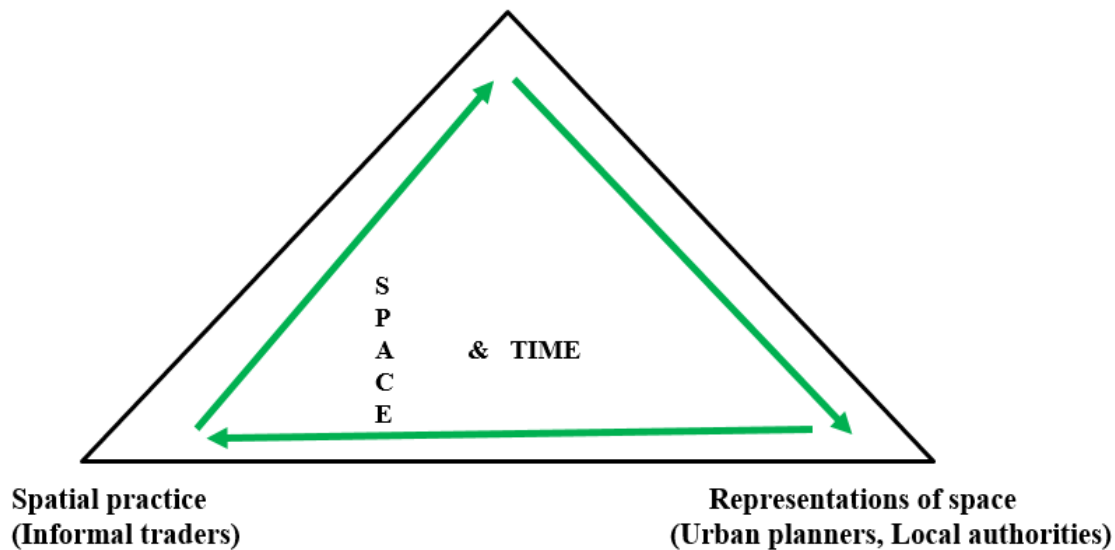
<sup>80</sup> Interview 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

### 6.3 Space Appropriation and utilization in the streets of Thika

Like any other town, spaces in the streets of Thika are used in different ways depending on the time of the day. The use of street spaces in Thika during the day differs from in the evenings. As Kidder (2009:310) notes, space is not only ‘determining but also people can resolve its uses and can be appropriated by the user against intended conceptions.’ As Lefebvre (1991) articulates that space is an experienced set of material practices from which meanings are assigned. A street vendor views space as a resource and, therefore, a means of getting his livelihood. For any government, the same space is a planning area, an abstract space that is ready to be transformed to accomplish some political goals. Lefebvre elaborates on the aspect of space using a spatial Triad, as shown in Figure 8

*Figure 8 Graphical representation of Lefebvre’s production of space*

**Representational space (Inhabitants and other users)**



(Source Author 2020)

In this Triad, Lefebvre (1991) describes representational space as the space of inhabitants and users. It is the passively experienced space in which the imagination seeks to change and become appropriate. In this thesis, the inhabitants of Thika and those who own shops are under this category. The space here is represented by the physical buildings, private fields, and parks, roundabouts and should remain the same to maintain the aesthetic value of the Town. It

represents how a street is supposed to appear in an ideal situation. Conflicts arise when the street vendors try to appropriate, whereas these spaces represent the beauty of Thika Town.

The second of Lefebvre's triad is representations of Space. These are the conceptualized space of planners, scientists, urbanists, etc., that tends towards a system of verbal signs (Lefebvre 1991:39). The urban planners have their way of representing space, especially according to what is thought to be good for the city and more an international city. Under this concept, the plans are drawn to attract foreign investors into the city. It brings into focus beautification programs that result in the eviction of informal traders in any town because these activities are not part of the plan. Thika is a perfect example of the beautification program between 2018-2019 that the World Bank and Kiambu County funded. The program was meant to undertake landscaping and facelift of a recreational park-Christina Garden, and the seven round-about within Thika's CBD, as shown in photos 29 & 30. Therefore, according to Lefebvre (1991), features underscored in such representations of space often serve as signifiers of prominent ideologies or representational spaces. These spaces conceived by the county government have become an action that has displaced some street vendors in Thika's CBD (Lefebvre, 2000:165; Harvey, 2001:203).

The third of Lefebvre's triad is the spatial practice of society. Lefebvre (1991) defines daily reality as daily routine and urban reality by the routes and networks that connect private places for work and leisure time. Street vendors react to the counter-appropriation of this space by redefining it and transforming it by imposing their zoning principles and positioning temporary objects such as pushcarts and sackcloth (Racaud 2018). Therefore, street vendors transform prime locations from highly restricted spaces to areas where merchandise is sold, especially in the evening, to make a livelihood. As Ndung'u (2004) emphasizes, street vendors are not localizable but seek to create places in conformity with abstract models. The local authorities can produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces when those operations take place; whereas the hawkers can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces in the streets (Tzamiir, 1979:85)



### **6.3.1 Space Transition and Acquisition of trading space.**

According to Babere (2015), space transition is the ability of the street vendors to possess the streets, parking spaces, and bus stops leading to a transformation of such locations. Street vendors will use any means to ensure their presence in the urban areas despite the harassment and displacements by local authorities. Vendors can innovatively use any means to remain in the streets, for example, to trade freely or to play hide and seek with the local authorities. In Thika, most street vendors have been appropriating these spaces in the evening between 5 pm to 9 pm or even up to midnight, depending on the products being sold. Babere (2015) notes that this selling in the evening creates a “New City” night market as the vendors can sell late at night and therefore have their market. It has allowed the informal traders to continue gaining economically and contributing to the vibrancy of Thika town. The “night market” is visible along Commercial Street near supermarkets such as Kassmat, Society stores’, Naivas, and Twiga Mart. A similar scenario is observed along Uhuru Street outside Tuskys supermarket, which connects Commercial Street.

The process of acquisition of space for street vendors depends on many factors. Getting the spot where one can display the merchandise depends on the principle of first possession (Kettles 2006). The principle implies that whoever enters the space gets the right to use it based on a first-come, first-served basis. The rights to use the space expire when you leave the space. When the same person uses the same space consistently over a long period, the vendor becomes the “owner.” The possession and ownership (though not legally) make a person claim ownership of the place (Racaud 2016). This method works perfectly, especially when an invasion of a new place.

Secondly, one can also acquire a vending space through social interaction; for example, a friend or a relative can recommend a person to a specific space; for example, the chairperson of Thika town vendors limited, Mr.Kimuti, has three spaces within Thika town. His wife sells in one of the spaces that are right opposite Postbank Thika on Kilimabogo street then the second space along the stadium perimeter wall is attended by a lady hired to sell the second-hand books. He normally takes charge of the third spot at the junction of Commercial Street and Kwame Nkrumah Street, just in front of Gathimaini Pharmacy Limited, where he sells face masks.



For the occupancy of a verandah of a shop that operates in the evening, the vendors can enter into an informal agreement (not legally binding) with the owner. One of the agreements may entail a vendor making payments to the shop owner at the end of the month or annually. The other agreement may be a gentleman's agreement where the vendor promises to provide "security" to the shop owner at night. Baba Simon<sup>81</sup>, a street vendor, sells passion fruit on a verandah belonging to an electronics shop. The owner of the shop has allowed Baba Simon to continue with his business at the verandah on condition security of the shop is maintained during the evening period

### **6.3.2 Space Contestation along Commercial Street**

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, Commercial Street is one of the busiest streets in Thika town. It measures about 470 meters long and is home to several lands uses along its sides. Most passengers use this Street as the main artery to access most bus and matatu stations to major estates in Thika and even those leading upcountry. The street experiences problems of space use depending on the time, site, and type of activity carried out. A lot of congestion in movement is experienced in the evening compared to morning hours, especially near the Matatu stages and supermarkets. When many commuters return home or connect to the next Matatu plying other routes, the street has seven Matatu stations. Most road users, including pedestrians, Boda-boda, Tuk-tuks, Matatus, and cyclists, struggle to reach their destination as street vendors sell their commodities, as shown in photo 30.

### **6.4 Conflicts by different actors on the use of space in Thika**

Street vending in Thika town brings many conflicts and contradictions between different actors. The conflicts are of different scales, with the rationale behind them as identified in the field. Some of the conflicts involve:-

- i) Street vendors and the Local authorities on issues of vending sites
- ii) Local authorities and the political environment

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Baba Simon on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019 on an alley connecting Thika main stage and Stadium Road

- iii) Conflicts between different departments within the local authority
- iv) The conflict between different private actors

#### **6.4.1 Conflicts -Street vendors and the Local authorities on the beautification program**

This conflict entails two major projects instituted by the County government of Kiambu designed to uplift the image of Thika town to attain city status but has resulted in the eviction of street vendors. Thika town and other urban centers with a population of 250,000 are earmarked for upgrading into cities after President Uhuru Kenyatta signed the Urban Areas and Cities (Amendment) Bill 2017. The two major projects undertaken by the County Government of Kiambu are, First, the rehabilitation of the Christina gardens together with the seven roundabouts within Thika's CBD (shown in photo 29 and table 11) and second, the construction of the modern markets in the various sub-counties of Kiambu. All roads within Thika's CBD have been rehabilitated.

Spire and Choplin (2018), while commenting on the beautification project in Accra, Ghana, note that these major urban transformations attempt to make the city conform to international standards. To achieve these objectives, large urban and infrastructure projects are undertaken aimed at elites and then "cleansing" operations of street vendors.

The current governor<sup>82</sup> of Kiambu, while inspecting some of this project in Thika, says...

"Thika will be the next city after Nakuru and, therefore, a county government will try its best to meet all the requirements of a municipality to be elevated into a city. The county government is undertaking massive development projects to achieve this goal," Hon. Nyoro said. The Kiambu Governor was addressing the citizens of Thika during a visit to the major projects being funded by the county government. He also assured the citizens that there was a proposal to have an airport in Thika.

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<sup>82</sup>[www.the-star.co.ke/counties/central/2021-07-05-thika-on-course-for-city-status-says governor-nyoro/](http://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/central/2021-07-05-thika-on-course-for-city-status-says-governor-nyoro/)

*Photo 30 Evening space Contestation along Commercial Street.*



(Source: Author, 2020)

It means that, like any other city in the world, Thika conforms to the international standards for the elites and cleansing operations of street vendors (Morange 2015). According to the County records<sup>83</sup>, approximately 56.16 million shillings were allocated for the beautification program targeted at Christina garden and seven Roundabout within the CBD. The beautification projects started in 2019 and were completed in early 2021. The seven roundabouts are between Uhuru Street, Kwame Nkrumah Street, Kenyatta Highway, and Thika Stadium. The project also covered Christina Wangari Gardens, located along Kenyatta Highway, as indicated in Table 11 and the landscape shown in photo 25

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<sup>83</sup> Environmental Impact Assessment Project Report for the Proposed Landscaping, Beautification and Installation of Street Furniture in Thika Municipality

*Table 11 Location and GPS coordinates of the beautification projects in Thika*

<b>Site</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Latitude</b>
<b>Christina Gardens</b>	<i>Between Kenyatta highway, Kwame Nkrumah Road and Uhuru Street</i>	<i>37° 4' 29.56" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 13.74" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 1</b>	<i>On Kwame Nkrumah Road (next to Gathimaini Supermarket)</i>	<i>37° 4' 21.01" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 14.58" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 2</b>	<i>On Uhuru Street (next to Posta and Family Bank)</i>	<i>37° 4' 25.41" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 6.21" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 3</b>	<i>On Kenyatta Highway (next to stadium and Mukiriti Market)</i>	<i>37° 4' 28.88" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 6.76" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 4</b>	<i>On Kwame Nkrumah Road (next to KRA offices)</i>	<i>37° 4' 29.62" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 1.45" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 5</b>	<i>On Uhuru Street (next to club image)</i>	<i>37° 4' 31.41" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 12.40" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 6</b>	<i>On Uhuru Street (next to Tuskys Chap Chap)</i>	<i>37° 4' 32.16" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 17.31" S</i>
<b>Roundabout 7</b>	<i>On Kwame Nkrumah (next to GT Bank)</i>	<i>37° 4' 41.60" E</i>	<i>1° 2' 17.20 S</i>

(Source: EIA Project Report 2018)

Most street vendors were evicted during the period to pave the way for the Beautification program. A good example is the eviction of photographers based at Christina Gardens. This crackdown was noted by the chairperson of TDBA while addressing west pickers and the governor during world environment day, as shown in Photo 10. Informal traders operating illegal structures/kiosks were also given the notice to vacate from the CBD's pavements, around Mama Ngina Garden and in front of people's businesses pending the commencement of a World Bank project to improve and expand the town's infrastructure and street lighting under the Nairobi Metropolitan infrastructure development program. The street vendors who used roundabouts (photo 31 B) as their evening trading areas were the most affected informal traders. It is quite similar to what was experienced in Ghana's capital Accra after an operation of decongestion and beautification in the city Centre. (Spire and Choplin, 2018)

Most of the street vendor has never returned to the park since 2019. The planned kiosks along the perimeter wall of Christina gardens were never constructed, and therefore the street vendors remained displaced. Photos 33 A & B shows part of the completed work in Christina Gardens and the roundabouts

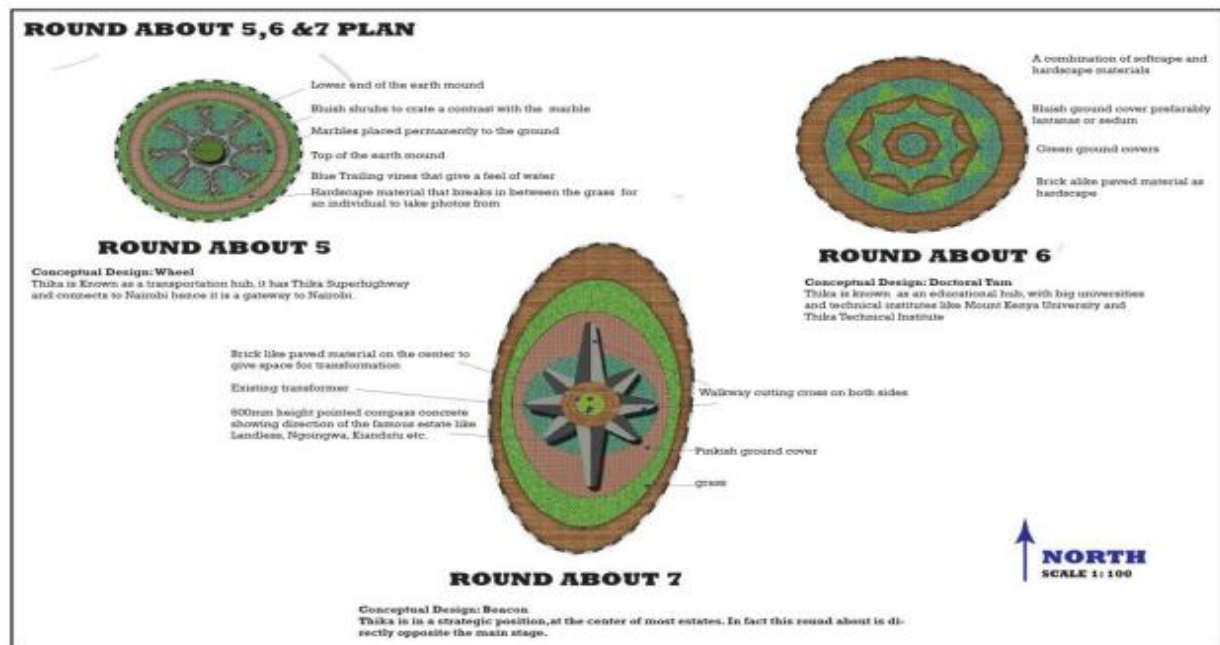
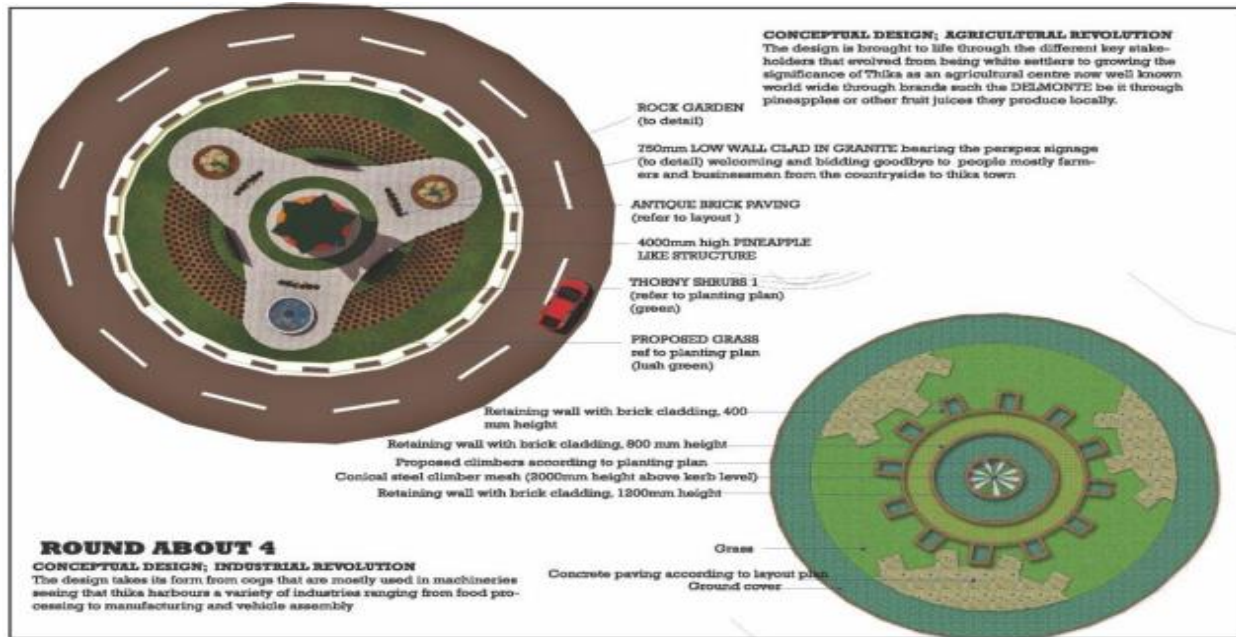
Photo 31(A) Landscape plans for the beautification program in Thika



(Source: EIA Project Report 2018)



Photo 32 (B) Landscape plans for the beautification program in Thika



(Source: EIA Project Report 2018 )

*Photo 33 A&B Rehabilitated Christina Wangari gardens and roundabouts*



Newly refurbished Christina Gardens (source: Author 2020)



Newly rehabilitated Commercial Street and Uhuru Street Round –about (Source: Author 2020)

When the beatification process began, most street vendors working in these spaces had long been displaced. Some of the newly refurbished round-about have been “new homes” for the street



families, like a roundabout between temple road, upper road, and Kwame Nkrumah road off Kenya Revenue Authority offices in Thika on photo 34

*Photo 34 Roundabout between Temple road, Upper road, and Kwame Nkrumah road*



(Source: Author 2020)

Apart from the beautification program, the second project involved the construction of modern markets in the sub-counties of Kiambu. These modern markets are meant to absorb all the street vendors who sell on the pavements, especially those from Ruiru, Juja, and Gatundu. The hawkers from within Thika are supposed to either go to Moi market, Jamhuri Market, or Madaraka market, where another modern market is awaiting construction.

Most of the markets are complete apart from the planned modern Madaraka market. Like the example of Machinga in Dar es Salaam and Lusaka, Zambia, hawkers are still coming back to the streets and shying off from these markets. Mr. Kimani<sup>84</sup>, a trader, and transporter at Juja modern market, notes that ...

*“Most traders shy off from these markets because they are far from Thika town and therefore cannot get their regular customers, especially in the evening. So many traders prefer to sell their goods in the morning and then go to Thika in the afternoon, which is*

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<sup>84</sup> interview on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021



*not far. Secondly, there was a problem in the allocation of spaces, most of the traders were brought from elsewhere, and therefore some of the traders preferred to go back to the streets in Thika.”*

The same fate was experienced for markets in Zambia, Tanzania, and even in Mamboleo new market in Kisumu (Racaud 2016) seems to be repeated in Kiambu. The street vendors are still returning to the streets and leaving empty stalls in some newly built modern markets like Juja market. The biggest question is how the stakeholders cannot learn from these examples in other cities in Kenya and other countries. The roll-out of the new modern market continues and may end up as “white elephants” despite the huge amount of money pumped into such projects. It asks if the street vendors are contacted when such mega projects are approved and receive lots of funding from financial institutions like the World Bank. An interview with the chairperson of the Madaraka market reveals some concerns about the new markets...

*“The problem with this modern market is that no one will be willing to occupy the first or second floor. The traders know that most customers will not be willing to go beyond the ground floor when shopping for their goods. In the Madaraka market, we prefer the shades to a multi-story market with several floors. Sometimes the local authorities and the other stakeholders undertake these projects without incorporating the opinions of the street vendors who are meant to benefit from such projects. As the County government plans to construct a new modern Madaraka market, our plea is that our opinions will be considered”.*

The second question is why institutions such as World Bank continue funding such projects. What is the motivation behind funding such projects that seems to benefit a small population than was intended? For some actors, the funding has to continue to benefit personally from the procurements of materials to build these markets or siphon part of the money in a corrupt way. For the financial institutions, could it be part of giving development loans at high-interest rates to developing countries? The country may be forced to repay these loans, while the projects do not benefit most citizens.

#### **6.4.2 Conflicts between Local Authorities and Political Environment**

It is the second conflict in the streets of Thika, pitting the local authorities against the politicians. The politicians in this context include leaders elected every five years as Members of county assemblies (MCA), Members of parliament (MP), County women representatives, the senator, and the governor. The most affected departments by this conflict within the local authority are the Inspectorate or the enforcement department, the planning department, and the human resource department.

In the contest between the two, Local authorities and politicians, the street vendor is the subject matter of the conflict, especially during the campaign before an election. During the campaign period, the politicians normally view the street vendors as political resources as they can be manipulated to vote for the politicians because of their big numbers. For politicians, it becomes very easy to mobilize street vendors as they are available at a specific time and place.

Since the 2010 Kenyan Constitution brought devolution to the counties, the former local authorities are now under the County government. The head of the county government is the Governor (politician); therefore, the activities undertaken by the local authorities depend on the serving governor's whims. The members of the county assembly (MCA) have a lot of stake in the operations of the local authorities because of their role in approving the head of different ministries within the counties.

During the campaigns for a general election, the crackdowns by the enforcement department (inspectorate) through the county askaris become less frequent. There are an increased number of hawkers who invade the streets of Thika than previously strictly policed. Commercial Street is the epicenter of street vending, barely 150meters from the police station and the Thika sub-county offices. Still, police and county officers cannot prevent street vendors from doing their business. During the election period, Governors who head the Counties are also on a campaign trail, so it becomes very hard to authorize any crackdowns, or the leaders risk losing votes from the street vendors.

In her paper, "Street Traders and "Good Officers": Crackdowns as a Relational Form of Urban Governance in Nairobi", Mutengwa (2018), notes that electoral candidates make up yet another

set of urban actors with an interest invested in the practice of crackdowns. While politicians seek to gain electoral support out of the management of crackdowns, their interests can still be understood within an exchange framework as extending a gift to street traders and expecting something in return. In this case, votes and not money are exchanged for the street traders' chance to work (Mutengwa 2018). Kariuki (2022) further notes that street vendors become the political resources during these elections

The second governor of Kiambu county promised street vendors reduction in a crackdown on his campaign trail in 2017(shown in photo 35 with other aspirants). He also promised to exempt small traders from paying taxes<sup>85</sup>. It was to be implemented in the 100 days of his new administration. The politician was using this strategy to woo small businesses and street vendors for votes; this meant that the Finance department could not get enough revenue from license fees levied on small businesses. Lack of enough revenue implies that it hampers service delivery in the county, as noted by an officer in the finance department. Upon the governor's election overwhelmingly, the county government, through the finance department, had a challenge in collecting the levies. The financial year 2018 saw frequent crackdowns by County Askaris on small enterprises forcing them to pay taxes as the governor seems to have forgotten the promises during the campaign period. Unfulfilled promises are the order of the day once the politicians assume power long after the elections, as it becomes business as usual again.

Another unfulfilled promise was an attempted allocation of street vendors at Mama-Ngina Garden; other traders fought it from the formal markets in Thika, especially Moi Market. The street vendors attempted to allocate themselves spaces in this garden, as seen in photo 36. The politicians kept the urban planning department in darkness about such an allocation of street vendors in the CBD. Later the traders were dispersed and promised by the new Governor to get them an alternative area of operation. The promise remains disappointing to date. It marks yet another conflict between politicians and local authority

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<sup>85</sup> The star newspaper 20th August 2017

Photo 35 Campaign Bilbords during the 2017 General elections



(Source: Schiegl 2017)

*Photo 36 Mama-Ngina Garden, where street vendors attempted to appropriate*



(Source: Mary Wambui 2017)

### **6.4.3 Conflict within the local authorities**

#### **Planning and Finance Department**

While the planning department and finance department are supposed to work in harmony, there is a conflict occasioned by street vendors. Such conflicts are brought about by internal competitions between the two departments on who should undertake a given function (Brown, 2006; May 2005). These have been necessitated by situations where street vendors have been licensed to operate within areas previously planned for other types of land use. For example, street vendors normally pay their annual license to the finance department but operate at the verandah and space allocated to Family Bank. These traders, two selling clothes and the other two selling fruits, have occupied a verandah belonging to Family Bank and operate daily

from morning till evening. The traders normally operate from morning to evening without harassment from the county enforcement team because of owning the annual trading license. One of the traders, Gilbert<sup>86</sup> (seen in photo 14), who sells at the verandah of a family bank, has been occupying the space for nearly three years. He notes...

*I normally pay my license to the county government, which allows me to operate in my current location. The family bank wanted to evict me from the security issue, but I had to show them my permit to operate in the space as granted to me by the finance department. I had to fight for my rights since I have been allowed to operate in this space.*

Where else the urban planning department cannot allow such to happen, the finance departments have no issues collecting payments from two traders for the same space. A similar scenario is witnessed when street traders selling fruits with handcarts (Mkokoteni in Swahili) pay daily and weekly licenses to the county officials, especially along Kisii road, as shown in photo 27B. While the handcarts partly block the street, especially for motor vehicles, these traders can continue with their business irrespective of traffic jams caused on Kisii Street.

#### **6.4.4 Conflicts between private actors**

##### **6.4.4.1 Street vendors and supermarkets**

In the course of doing their business, street vendors and supermarkets usually conflict in contestation for space. The supermarket complains that street vendors always block entry points, and the supermarkets react by having their security guards push away the street vendors. The guards become overwhelmed, especially in the evening when the number of street vendors increases and the entry to the supermarket becomes partially blocked. Supermarkets such as Kassmat have become innovative and normally display some of their goods on the verandah for maximum use of their space.

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<sup>86</sup> Street vendor at Commercial street near Family bank, Interview on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020



This strategy can be viewed in two folds;

- (i) As a way to cordon off their space from street vendors but also
- (ii) A sales promotion strategy to attract more customers who can do window shopping may result in impulse buying.

*Photo 37 Kassmat Supermarket displays items on their verandah on Commercial Street*



(Source: Author 2020)

Other supermarkets like Thika-tex have also borrowed a leaf from Kassmat supermarket and have always displayed their goods on their verandah. Hotels have also embraced this method as a way of keeping off-street vendors from their spaces; a good example is White-Line hotel which normally cooks some of its food like chapattis on its verandah and sells to pedestrians who might not have enough money or time to get into their hotels and eat a whole meal. The white line hotel strategy at the junction of stadium road and Commercial Street has kept many street vendors, especially groundnut sellers, who used to congest the hotel's verandah. The same strategy has been used by Society supermarket in safeguarding their space by putting string on their parking area, as shown in the photo

*Photo 38 Outside Society's Supermarket*



Society's supermarket guarding the space in front of their supermarket against street vendor's invasion during the day. This Parking space is meant for Society's Supermarket.

(Source: Author 2020)



#### **6.4.4.2 Conflict between Street vendors and Taxis**

Along Commercial Street, especially along Christina gardens, some parking spaces are reserved for taxis. The place has always been a clash between the street vendors and the Taxi drivers in the evening. Whereas the taxi operations take place almost 24 hours, it is in the evening that conflicts with street vendors arise. The taxis pay for their parking spaces daily but normally find it difficult to operate in the same space in the evenings as hundreds of street vendors normally appropriate these spaces. Andrew,<sup>87</sup> a taxi driver who operates near Christina Gardens, narrates a conflict with the street vendors...

*We normally have a clash with street vendors because they will always have a way of occupying our spaces, especially in the evening. After driving my customers to their destination areas and returning to my point of operation (at Christina gardens), I normally find street vendors have already appropriated my space. One time I almost ran over their wares with my car so that they could move away. It resulted in some clashes between street vendors and taxi drivers. We fought back because we have the right to this space as we pay the sub-county Government to operate from here every day.*

#### **6.4.4.3 Conflicts between Formal traders Association and street vendors**

As earlier mentioned, the Thika District Business Association (TDBA) represents formal traders' associations in Thika. The association has been at loggerheads with the street vendors and, at times, with the formal market traders in the Moi market. TDBA has always received an audience with the local authorities as a representative of formal traders' affairs in the town. To avoid direct competition with hawkers, the association petitioned the local authorities only to allow the street vendors to sell from 6 pm and not 5 pm. In all the agendas with the Sub-County government of Thika, TDBA has always raised the issue of street vendors as the reason for all the problems and disorganization in Thika Town. According to the chairperson of the TDBA

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<sup>87</sup> Interview on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020

association, only 300 hawkers are considered genuine as per the list in their possession. These hawkers should be allocated vending spaces within the CBD when a chance arises. Other street vendors are considered invaders and “foreigners” who should be evicted from the streets or taken to formal markets like Moi market.

The TBDA has conflicted with the traders in the Moi market since the botched attempt to settle some of the street vendors at Mama-Ngina Garden. The Moi market traders held demonstrations (as shown in photo 22) which called for the former governor's intervention. Waititu. According to the Moi market traders, TBDA and some politicians crafted a plot to have some street vendors in the CBD. It could be counterproductive to the operations at Moi market because it meant losing customers to the new market at Mama-Ngina Garden and “killing completely” the Moi market outside the CBD. For the last three years, Moi market traders have refused to pay fees to the county government of Kiambu because, according to their chairman, the local authority had done nothing to solve the issues of “foreign” street vendors. The plan to create a hawkers market in the CBD without their involvement has also been part of their complaints, yet to be sorted out. The leadership of TDBA and the management of the Moi market have not seen Eye to eye. The chairperson of Moi market complains about the collaboration between TDBA and Local authorities have been to frustrate traders at Moi market,

#### **6.4.4.4 Conflicts between street vendors and their Associations**

As noted in the earlier chapters, street vendors join or start associations with various objectives. The main objectives include welfare issues or joining an association facilitating the advocacy issue relating to informal trading activities. Alila & Mitullah (2002) note that associations may respond to welfare or advocacy issues but cannot respond when a member's business collapses. Makes many street vendors not bother to join these associations, especially when struggling to sustain or revive their businesses.

In Thika, from interviews conducted, the leadership of these associations is often marred by mistrust and opportunism, as outlined by Omollo<sup>88</sup>, a street vendor at Commercial Street who

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<sup>88</sup>Street vendor at Mama Ngina gardens, Interview on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

trades at Mama-Ngina Garden. The vendor says he cannot join the associations, as most association leadership cannot be trusted with members' funds...

*I cannot join these associations again; they are only after the member's subscriptions, but while in trouble with the county askaris, they cannot bail me out. Some leaders are eyeing political positions and therefore have no time with their members as the local authorities continue to harass us daily. The local authority already compromises the current leadership of associations like TTVL. I don't think they can help me in my business because of serving their interests.*

For Jean, a groundnut seller at the junction of stadium road and Commercial Street, joining a street vendor association has been full of challenges. After joining one, it collapsed before celebrating its second birthday. The group started with ten members who were groundnut sellers and then soon opened doors to other vendors selling different products like eggs and shoes. What bonded the group together was because of operating in the same area, i.e., within Commercial street and stadium road. Jean<sup>89</sup> narrates why the association collapsed...

*We had started very well as a self-help group where we were contributing Ksh.100/- per day and giving it out as a Merry-go-round. The commitment was good, and we were thinking of registering the group. The challenge came when some members stopped remitting their daily subscriptions, having already benefited from the previous rounds. Because mistrust among the members had already set in, we did not continue the registration process, so the group collapsed. This trend is common among other groups that existed before our group. The other major problem was trust issues and partly bad leadership*

Established associations like Thika Town Hawkers Welfare have had their share of conflicts among their members. The outgoing chairperson<sup>90</sup>, who has been in charge of the group since its inception in 2010, narrates the challenges of steering a group of initially 60 members and

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<sup>89</sup> Street vendor at Commercial street, Interview on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019

<sup>90</sup> interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020

currently 43 members. He says that the membership in the group decreased due to various reasons...

*“It has been a challenge to continue leading the group as a chairman of the Thika Town Hawkers Welfare association after serving them for ten years. Some executive committee members have been pushing me to misuse the company’s money and take advantage of the ignorant members, but my conscious cannot allow me. I want to resign with clean hands rather than engage in questionable deals with my other officials. I cannot be involved in corrupt dealings rob our other members of their hard-earned livelihoods. I strongly feel that I have already achieved my objective as a chairman at that time.*

Such a conflict in the group has made some members exit because the leaders of the associations are perceived as corrupt. A study on women's street vendors in Kenya by Mitullah (2002) argues that “It seems most associations do not follow the conventional methods of the periodic election of leaders. It has partly contributed to the same leaders continuing to run operations of associations, even in cases where they have out of ideas. Over the years, such leaders have become less accountable and are not transparent. This situation results in tension and suspicion among the members, with some members losing interest, while others split to form new groups” (Alila & Mitullah 2002).

Despite the non-commitment of some street vendors due to different reasons, as noted in the three cases, some vendor associations have made progress. The story of the Thika Stadium street vendor Association (An affiliate of Thika Town Hawkers Welfare) revolves around negotiating for vending sites and working hours with the Kiambu Governor and the area Member of the County Assembly-Township Ward. The chairperson of Thika Stadium street vendors Association<sup>91</sup> narrates how it secured sites for its members...

*As an association, we have been lobbying for street vendors on the issue of vending sites with the Thika Sub-County Government. So far, we have successfully*

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<sup>91</sup> interview on 18th January 2020

*negotiated for two sites:-Along, Mama-Ngina drive, where they have settled 60 members, and along the stadium wall, where we have settled 80members. Our third trading site for our remaining members was supposed to be at Mama-Ngina Garden; the plans were aborted at the last minute due to opposition by Moi market traders. Most of these vendors who are our members were facing harassment every time from the county askaris bearing in mind that most of them are now old, but now this has reduced. The county government has also offered us a street lamp to operate at night.*

From the interview, the chairperson is unsure if their stay at the stadium wall is assured when the new regime comes into power in the 2022 general election. The chairperson hopes that when the new leadership in the county assumes power in the forthcoming elections, their members will not be evicted from their current vending site. The second success story is how street vendor associations negotiated with the governor when trading in the streets. Initially, street vendors started their operations at 6 pm, but during the covid-19 curfew imposed by the national government, the Governor allowed their operations to commence as early as 4 pm. Then, when the curfew hours change from 7 pm to 10 pm, the vendors can commence their operations from 5 pm.

## **6.5 Ambiguities in the Regulatory Framework**

### **Constitutional of Kenya 2010, Hawkers and Street Vendors Bill 2019, and the Local authority's by-laws**

Like many sub-counties in Kenya, hawking is banned in the streets of Thika Town (Gacih 2014). While the 2010 constitution, as explained in the previous chapters, gives power to the citizens of Kenya to be involved in the governance of their towns; the sub-county of Thika has taken a hardline stance to ban street vending in the CBD (Kimani, Gachigua,& Kariuki, 2021). The Constitution gives the devolved units (Counties) the power to enact laws through the County government Act 2012. The hawkers who are part of the marginalized groups are protected by this act and can seek redress to their grievances. The biggest challenge is that most hawkers are unaware of provisions in the Constitution that protect them and their rights from earning their

livelihoods in urban areas. The sub-county government seems to have taken advantage of this ignorance and has not involved the street vendors in discussing their rights as part of public participation. Omollo<sup>92</sup>, a trader at Mama –Ngina drive, is quick to comment on this issue ...

*The sub-county government does not involve us in some of the decisions taken in Thika town. The Sub-County Government only involves the representative of TBDA, who is in charge of the formal business, to discuss issues with street vendors. Most of these issues affect us directly, but according to the local authorities, our opinion is unimportant. The system already compromises the so-called representatives of the street vendors' associations and, therefore, cannot purport to represent us.*

The street vendors have been forced to work at the margins of the street as some of these local authority by-laws seem to maintain the colonial ideal of “cleaning” the city and having modern cities. It brings into focus issues to do with “rights to the city,” as expounded by Lefebvre (1991) because the street vendors have “lost” their urban citizenship, which guarantees them political, civil, cultural, and economic rights, as noted by Swider (2015). There seems to be an effort to align the local authority’s by-laws, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, and the County government Act 2012, which makes harassment and eviction to be part of the daily life of a street vendor. In reality, the local by-laws seem to override the supreme constitution of the county, especially on its implementation in urban spaces.

The local government by-laws shown in Figure 7 still apply even in the current County Governments Laws. Part of this law in section 163(a) states that...every municipal council, town council, and urban council shall subject to any other written law relating to it, have power-prohibit or control peddling, hawking and street trading and to control peddlers, hawkers, and street traders

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<sup>92</sup> Interview on 17/2/2020

Figure 9 Section of the Local government by-law

Rev. 2010]	Local Government	CAP. 265	95
(m)	to control street decorations, and to prohibit or control the erection and removal of temporary platforms, seats and other structures for the use of the public at any meeting or entertainment or for the accommodation of spectators at any procession, exhibition, ceremony or spectacular display of any kind;	Street decorations.	
(n)	to control music halls, public halls, concert rooms, public billiard rooms and other places of public amusement, public recreation or public resort which are not required to be licensed under the Films and Stage Plays Act.	Places of public amusement. Cap. 222.	
<b>163.</b> Every municipal council and, except in regard to the matters contained in paragraph (g), every town council and urban council shall subject to any other written law relating thereto, have power —		Powers to control trades and occupations. L.N. 634/1963, 21 of 1966, L.N. 21/1970, 31 of 1971, Sch., 11 of 1984, Sch.	
(a)	to prohibit or control peddling, hawking and street trading and to control peddlers, hawkers and street traders;	Hawking.	
(b)	to control barbers and hairdressers and barbers' and hairdressers' shops;	Barbers.	
(c)	to control the trade, business or occupation, and the business premises, of dealers in second-hand goods, including bottles, sacks, bones and tins;	Second-hand goods dealers.	

(Source: National Council for Law Reporting 2010)

Brown referred to this kind of governance where other laws seem to “supersede” the constitution as ‘fuzzy city governance’ (2017:28 as quoted by Kimani et al. 2021) because the two work differently. This contradiction, therefore, seems to disadvantage street vendors who will continue to pay bribes to the county council askaris to avoid being taken to court. The street vendors seem to have accepted their fate just because of their ignorance of the law, especially on what the new constitution states in their favour.

This contradiction addresses the second objective of this thesis which entails the issue of regulation. Some of the laws and their regulation is affecting street vending operations, forcing hawkers to adopt other ways of surviving, e.g., giving bribes, which takes a chunk of the income

they make from their businesses. According to Africa's uncensored media (2016), some corrupt local authority officers collect bribes of around \$ 1 million a month from thousands of hawkers in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi. The same trend is replicated in Thika, where county askaris seem to take bribes from hawkers. The hawkers confidently sell their goods in the streets, especially in the early afternoon, having given bribes to the Council askaris. Baba Simon<sup>93</sup>, a street vendor, involved in the selling passion of fruit, says...

*“...I’m used to giving Ksh.50/-(0.39Euros) every day so that I can operate in my current location daily. The only caution county askaris give is that I should not change my vending location; otherwise, I will be taken to the cells and forget coming to Thika to undertake my business again...”*

The by-laws implemented by the Thika sub-county government also include applying the General Nuisance law formulated during the colonial era. The law permits city enforcement officers to arrest anyone creating a “general nuisance” in public spaces (Hendriks, 2010). Under this law, hawking in public spaces is not allowed, and anyone found guilty can be arrested, fined, or their goods impounded, as explained by Hendricks (2010). The Kiambu inspectorate<sup>94</sup> officer confirms the application of this law while explaining how law and order are maintained in the urban spaces of Thika...

*We still use the General nuisance by-law when dealing with street vendors in the urban spaces of Thika. As enforcement officers, we ensure that we implement the law like any other law contained in our by-laws. However, we try to be as diplomatic as possible to minimize any confrontations within the CBD*

The local authority by-laws ignore the importance of the informal sector through policy frameworks such as vision 2030 and the new Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill 2019. A keen look at the Micro and Small Enterprises act of 2012 boosts the informal sector, while the Urban and Cities act of 2011 does not criminalize street vending like

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<sup>93</sup> Interview on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at his farm in Gatanga

<sup>94</sup> Interview with an Inspectorate officer in Kiambu County on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020



the local authority's by-laws. The preceding discussion shows how contradictory the by-laws are to other pieces of legislation and therefore opening a loophole of being misused by the implementers to the disadvantage of street vendors (Lyons and Snoxell 2005, Mitullah 2005, Schlegel and Racaud 2016). If there is no harmonization of these laws, then the street vendors will continue to be at the mercy of the enforcement officers in Thika. The crackdowns and harassment continue to be the norm for all street vendors trying to earn a living in urban spaces.

The second set of laws that is useful to street vending but seems to contradict the formulators and the beneficiaries is the Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill 2019. The bill is still in its second reading in the Senate. The legislation comprehensively addresses the issue of street vendors more than any other bill ever presented in parliament. As discussed in the earlier chapters, the bill seeks to recognize the rights of informal traders and regulate their activities in the urban space. Under this bill, the areas where street vending takes place are designated and allow for public participation. During the second reading of the bill on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019, at the senate, the legislator of Isiolo county Ms. Dullo Fatuma Adan,<sup>95</sup> is quoted supporting the bill...

*Box 6 Senate Hansard Report*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I wish to take this opportunity to second the Bill. Street vendors are the ones whose rights are always violated. It is, therefore, high time that we take care of their interests. Small business people will always be present, but people look down upon them. They do not take them seriously because they bring in very little money. However, I believe that the vendors are the ones who bring in a lot of money, especially considering that banks like Equity rely so much on these small traders. That is why Equity Bank is replicated almost everywhere in the country. They contribute a lot to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This Bill will regulate how counties are supposed to manage the small business community in our counties, especially where they carry out their businesses in pathetic areas. Some of them are even on the streets, where they are chased left, right and Centre. Nobody accords them concerning ensuring they

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<sup>95</sup> Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019 Senate Hansard report

have a decent place to conduct their business.

Senate Hansard Report Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

The bill looks similar in many clauses to the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 of India, which was fronted by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). The difference between the two pieces of legislation is that unlike in India, where the bill originated from the hawkers and was sponsored by the vendors' association, it was bottom-up. In Kenya, the Governor of Murang'a County, Hon. Mwangi Wairia is credited with the formulation of the Street Vendors' bill. The implication is that the street vendors in India can own the document because they are involved in formulating the bill through their views. The Kenyan version of the bill is more "elitist," as noted by Kimani et al. (2021), because the formulator is a politician and may seem to be imposing the bill on the hawkers. The street vendors seem unaware of the current bill still pending in the senate for the final reading. An interview with street vendors in Thika reveals that most are unaware of the bill, even among their association leaders.

The bill is still pending at the senate; awaiting its 3<sup>rd</sup> reading for it to become law. It's hoped that the implementation will be done to the latter to save actors in the informal sector. The bill should not suffer the same fate of slow or non-implementation as some acts and sessional papers which came before the bill and have remained on shelves gathering dust. The lack of ownership by the people it intends to protect might render it ineffective because the hawkers will always think the politicians who formulated it will use it as a political tool. The hawkers know that the same politicians might use such bills to campaign during the elections to get votes. The bill was formulated in 2018, but by the end of 2021, the bill was yet to become an act of parliament even after public participation on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

The Hawkers and Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill 2019 might be the legislation likely to bring some harmony to the informal sector. The cost-benefit analysis might favour the street vendors. Still, as mentioned earlier, the passing of the bill to law is long overdue, especially as the life of the current senate ends. The full implementation of the bill will ensure that street vendors have a voice in the public space and that there is recognition by the county

government.

### **6.5.1 Implications of Regulations and legal framework**

The legal framework discussed in this research was based on several significant acts in the operations of informal traders. The constitution of Kenya, Three acts of parliament, and a bill have been highlighted in chapter 1. The Urban areas and cities Act 2011, Environmental management and co-ordination act revised edition 2012, Micro and small enterprise Act 2012, The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill 2019, and the constitution of Kenya, Set a good framework within which informal traders can operate.

The work of implementing the legal framework is left in the hands of the County governments through the various offices established under the County Government Act of 2012. Unfortunately, the regulations by the regulatory bodies in the field have not matched the rights stipulated in the acts for most street vendors interviewed. The crackdown on street vendors in some parts of Thika's CBD is still being reported, with the example of informal traders evicted from Christina Gardens<sup>96</sup> and various roundabouts within the town. The evictions were due to a beautification program undertaken jointly by the County Government of Thika and the World Bank. The public participation requirement still exists in the Acts of parliament, as street vendors complain that decisions are made without their knowledge. A perfect example is how the Mama Ngina garden was allocated to street vendors while the Moi market vendors were unaware of the move.

Though policy framework such as vision 2030 recognizes the informal sector and its importance, those in charge of county government are still not recognizing street vendors. The hawkers are seen as goons out to cause havoc, as seen from the following remarks given by the regional

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<sup>96</sup> Christina Wangari garden was initially known as Coronation garden. It is a historical site, which is in the heart of Thika Town. The garden is named after a famous woman freedom fighter, Wangari who was involved in the struggle for the country's independence. The garden was designated as a public open space in 1942 by the colonial government. It changed the name to Christina Wangari garden in 1963 after independence owing to the lapse of colonization (Gacihhi 2014)

principal County administrator in Thika.

“Responding to their grievances, Wanjau<sup>97</sup> called for patience among the traders and Thika residents as the county government was working on a long-term solution to the hawker menace. He added the county enforcement team was doing everything possible to temporarily contain the situation by arresting and confiscating the hawkers’ wares to discourage them from selling along the town streets. “Our stores are full of the merchandise confiscated from this hawker.”

Therefore, the current force applied to the street vendors is still similar to what was applied in colonial times, with a lack of recognition. Therefore, like any other part of Kenya, up-to-date street vending in Thika continues to experience less attention regarding policies that can lead to sustainability. Street vendors are still largely regarded as illegal, non-compliant with regulations, and least considered in distributing public goods and services. Mr. Maina, a street vendor from Githurai, reveals that most of them are running away from even strict policies imposed by the County Government of Nairobi. The vendor says...

*“I have been operating my business here in Thika for the last two years. I buy my Pullovers from Gikomba and come to Thika every evening for two main reasons: the Nairobi county police, who are very tough on street vendors in the city. Those in Thika are a bit tolerant and usually end their activities by 5 pm, paving the way for us to undertake our businesses. Secondly, my preference for Thika is because I can be able to sell my Pullovers at a higher price than in Nairobi. After all, Nairobians can walk to Gikomba and get the same product at a lower price, unlike those in Thika because of the distance”.*

The policies on the street vending also depend on the regime that is in existence in a given city. Most of the political aspirants will promise policy changes to entice the voters. Once elected, the leader will want to attract middle-class and upper-class populations by developing new policies that could see street vendors being evicted (Roever & skinner 2016). To impress street vendors

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<sup>97</sup> Regional Principal County Administrator Christopher Wanjau responding to Mukiriti traders/Thika residents on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 <https://www.thikatowntoday.co.ke/2018/06/police-lob-teargas-to-disperse.html> ( Accessed on 30/10/2019)

in Kenya, as a politician, one has to promise that new spaces will be created in the CBD for trading.

However, looking at the street vendors bill 2019, some areas can be abused by those who will be in charge of its implementation. For example, on the clause outlining the fees to be paid by the street vendors, the bill might charge higher prices and discourage the vendors if not carefully checked. A reasonable amount should be charged; for example, under the Kiambu Finance act of 2018, a hawker is supposed to pay Kshs 20/- per day, which translates to about Kshs 100/- per week when assuming that the charges are from Monday to Friday. Annually with approximately 52 weeks, this can be approximately 5,200. It is reasonable and can even be higher than the 5,000/- licensed charged on formal businesses that are registered under the county government

Another challenge the act may face during its implementation will be the issue of creating awareness among street vendors. The best platform will be if the information about the bill is done through the street vendors association. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of street vendors belong to associations. According to the research conducted between January & July 2020 on the street vendors in Thika, only 21% belonged to the street vendor's association. It may make the dissemination of the contents of the bill difficult leaving room for the local authority police to take advantage and crack down on the street vendors, as noted in India after the implementation of the Street vendor act of 2014. Kumar (2019) notes, "Recognizing the importance of the hawking sector in sustaining the Indian economy; the Central Government enacted the Street Vendors Act, 2014 to give street vendors the legal right to vend. However, Kumar further explains that *"five years into the current government's tenure, the vendors are still being evicted by local bodies and are seen as "encroachers on public land."* As the Kenyan senate continues debating on this bill and hopefully enacts it as a law, both the national and the county governments or any other stakeholder should prepare the best way to disseminate this information to the street vendors and probably allow for its full implementation

## **6.6 Vending and the making of a Metropolis from Below**

Street vending in Thika town shows how hawkers can connect the secondary town and its hinterland to the capital city and the outside world. Thika, on the margins of Nairobi city, has experienced multiple movements of people and is often associated with street vendors' flow. From the field, it can be noted that street vendors from Nairobi metropolitan area have been able to bypass the repressive regulating systems in the city to appropriate spaces in the secondary town of Thika. While street vending in the capital Nairobi has been associated with many brutalities and sometimes death of Street vendors (African uncensored 2016), in Thika, it is “tolerated” comparatively.

From the field, street vending in Thika seems to have taken an upward trend from the beginning of the year 2016. Coincidentally it marks the peak of the chaotic confrontation of street vendors in Eastleigh (Nairobi) and the formal traders in this commercial hub. Three factors seem to be the reason behind the Metropolisation from below by street vendors in Thika. The factors include:-

- (i) Rate of urbanization in Thika town
- (ii) Tolerance by the regulatory framework and
- (iii) Political environment

### **6.6.1 Rate of urbanization in Thika town.**

The rate of the urbanization process has been overwhelming, with the town's population doubling in a decade. As noted in chapter 2, the concluded census report of 2019 shows an increase in the population of Thika from 136,576 in the 2009 census to 279,429 in 2019 (KNBS 2019). For any entrepreneur, this means a market for their products. A secondary town in the margins of Nairobi had suddenly woken up after years of being inconspicuous by the decline in industrial and agricultural function due to the structural adjustment program (SAPs) in the 1990s. It seemed like those days when Thika was the “Birmingham of Kenya” was long gone with the collapse of many industries. Athi river town, also within the Nairobi metropolitan area, seems to have taken over from Thika as the most upcoming industrialized town after Nairobi and Mombasa.

Street vending always follows human traffic; therefore, with its population, Thika town has since attracted hawkers from nearby towns. The big population is connected to the city of Nairobi by the actors who get manufactured goods from formal markets like Gikomba, Eastleigh, and Kamukunji. Second-hand goods from Gikomba America imported from European and other parts of the world can get to the streets of Thika and its hinterland either in the evening or via periodic markets. The new clothes from China, Turkey, or Dubai are channeled from Eastleigh through the inconspicuous trade routes provided by street vendors. At the same time, most accessories-phone or electronics together with shoes and sandals find their way to Thika from Kamukunji.

For the customers who are in the hinterlands, most of the goods flow to them through the periodic markets that are conducted on different days of the week. The other way is when some of the people from the surrounding towns come to seek services in Thika town, which is also an administrative center. After the new constitution came into effect, the headquarters of Kiambu County were temporarily hosted in Thika town before the completion of the offices in Kiambu town. The Governor's seat was in Thika; therefore, most services were sought in the town. The transitional period brought many people to Thika town to seek administrative services, which meant more customers were available in the street. Thika level-5 hospital is still a stopover for many patients from the hinterlands of Thika and therefore attracts quite several street vendors at the main gate and along General Kago Street. According to the Medical Superintendent of Thika level 5 hospitals Dr. Andrew Joshua Toro...the wards in this hospital are full and normally have about 2,000<sup>98</sup> patients daily. The hospital serves 60-70% of referrals from neighboring Gatundu, Ruiru, and Juja Sub-counties, Murang'a, Machakos, Kirinyaga, and Nairobi Counties, together with the Northern frontier county of Garissa. The total catchment is between 3-5million, and it is the largest referral hospital in Kiambu County ([www.thikatoday.co.ke](http://www.thikatoday.co.ke))

The street is among the busiest as it serves the Thika level-5 hospital, Thika Technical training institute, Thika women's prison, Moi market, Mount Kenya University, and the headquarters of Bidco Oil Company. All this means is that the flow of people in these parts of Thika has enabled

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<sup>98</sup> <https://www.thikatoday.co.ke/2017/03/thika-level-5-hospital-is-in-class-of.html?m=1>

street vendors to take advantage and do their business throughout the day.

The population increase in Thika town has been explained to be a result of infrastructural development, which continues to connect the town with others. The completion of the Thika superhighway in 2012 meant that traveling between Thika and Nairobi was reduced from 2hrs to 45minutes-1hour (depending on the travel time). While the cost of land and housing in Thika is lower than in Nairobi, the two towns are only 40km apart, explaining the reasons for the movement of the population to this secondary town. The urban sprawl and real estate business boom in Thika can partly explain the movement and settlement of the population, according to the Managing director<sup>99</sup> Of the Silverseed land-selling company based in Thika. It means multiple movements of commuters to Nairobi and other surrounding towns in the morning, while the reverse is experienced in the evening when people return from work. Kiambu County is often referred to as the “bedroom of Nairobi,” with Thika being the biggest commercial town in the county; probably, it explains why the influx of passengers to this secondary town is on the rise. In the evening, hawkers strategically appropriate the spaces in the streets of Thika to take advantage of passengers getting off the passenger vehicles. Most passengers coming home will find it easier and more convenient to buy from street vendors rather than going to formal markets like Moi or Jamhuri. At this hour of the evening, most of the formal markets are closing for the day, and some are poorly lit, especially the Moi market, raising the issue of insecurity. From the margins of the streets, the hawkers can serve travelers from Nairobi and other towns connecting through Thika.

The installation of an institution of higher learning is also highlighted as a factor that has led to the increase in the population of Thika. As mentioned in chapter one, the influx of three major private universities and public universities on its outskirts and tertiary colleges has made Thika a college town. The population of college students from nearly all parts of the country has not only provided street vendors with a ready market, but the students have taken up hawking as a way of earning income. Some students use their hostel as warehouses for goods sourced from Nairobi markets like Gikomba and Eastleigh. In the evening, after their classes, the students find

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<sup>99</sup> Interview on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019



appropriate spaces in the streets of Thika to sell their goods. The college students are also involved in these businesses in their halls of residence, and when evening comes to move to the streets of Thika to sell to the general public. Some students have chosen to remain in Thika town even after graduating from their respective universities, especially if their businesses are still doing well. From the margins of their hostels, these students have connected Nairobi and Thika through trading in cheap goods. The uniqueness of the student hawkers is their ability to sell goods in fashion to fellow students and other youths or the general public who are very specific about fashion. Most of the student hawkers specialize in the selling of second-hand clothes and shoes that are in fashion. The popularity of hostels in the Moi market among students is not just for accommodation purposes but strategically being positioned near Thika's CBD and therefore able to operate even late at night.

The actions of other actors like wholesalers and brokers have enabled the movement of goods from the hinterlands to Thika, leaving the street vendors to undertake the distribution of the products. From the capital of Malawi, Lilongwe wholesalers of groundnuts can deliver them to the Jamhuri market. Street vendors, the best supplier of this product, confess one of the wholesalers<sup>100</sup> who order the product from Malawi. The street vendors buy them in smaller units, but their frequency of getting the new supplies is higher than other retailers who buy in bulk. The ability of street vendors to strategically place themselves in the margins of the pavements in Thika allows faster interactions with the customers leading to higher sales. The supplies of onions from Tanzania through the Namanga border find their way through the Madaraka market and finally through the kitchen of most residents of Thika, courtesy of street vendors.

In summary, one can conclude that Thika town's urbanization has been accompanied by street vendors who have worked in the margins to connect the cities and rural areas. Despite the presence of other actors capable of connecting the two areas, the street vendors have connected the two areas from below.

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<sup>100</sup> A groundnut wholesaler based in Jamhuri market- an interview conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> march 2020

### **6.6.2 Tolerance by the regulatory framework**

Street vending in Thika is still viable, and the numbers are growing every evening. While the ban on street vending in Thika town still stands, hawkers have always found their way through the system, enabling them to continue operating. The treatment of street vendors between the capital Nairobi and Thika is on a different scale due to the differences in the regulatory framework. The comparison may be deceptive, especially because a city and a secondary town are within the Nairobi metropolitan area.

The chaotic scenes and sometimes even the death of hawkers in Nairobi during their confrontation with the police have scared some street vendors who have sorted spaces in Thika town. The struggle for space between formal traders and street vendors in Eastleigh-Nairobi left scores injured in the confrontation. The worst confrontation in Thika town was the demonstration against the invasion of “foreign street vendors” in Mama-Ngina Garden in 2018. It is quite different from the history of confrontation between hawkers in Nairobi, the police, and the city inspectorate, as recorded in the media like Africa uncensored (2016).

From the field and interviews with several actors like street vendors, County officials, formal business associations, and market leaders in the formal markets, one can conclude that street vending is tolerated in Thika town. The Sub-County government of Thika has reluctantly allowed the street vendors' operations in the evening from 6 pm. However, from the field, one can observe the hawkers starting streaming into the pavements as early as 5 pm. The operating hour has not gone well with formal traders, whose preference was 7 pm. It is a total shift from the past, i.e., before 2016, when street vending was banned at any time of the day. The tolerated street vendors have always tried to come earlier than the stipulated time. Some have even started their vending as early as 10 am, especially those ready to play cat and mouse with County Askaris. The vendors around Whiteline hotel, the two alleys connecting Kisii Street, and the stadium road with Thika main stage have always operated confidently, especially for some who confessed to giving bribes to the enforcement officers. The giving of bribes enables hawkers to predict when the next crackdown will occur. Some enforcement officers (askaris) will even advise the hawkers not to open their businesses at a certain hour because of the impending

crackdown. The unlucky street vendors can “buy their freedom” and avoid being taken to court or, worse still, forfeit some of their goods to the officers during a crackdown.

An interview with the city enforcement<sup>101</sup> officers reveals a lot of pending issues with the county government. He says...

*Delayed payments and lack of proper tools for doing our duties like batons, uniforms, torches together with other protective gear are demotivating. When salaries are delayed, some officers are motivated to rely on the bribes given by street traders to cater to various personal needs. These delays also mean that for some of them, it's time to look for “greener” pastures elsewhere to cater to their needs.*

The high turnover at the inspectorate department means fewer enforcement officers who can deal with street vendors in the CBD apart from other duties allocated to them within the entire town. The few enforcement teams are always overwhelmed by the surge of hawkers in the streets. In summary, the system may tolerate street vending due to the lack of human resources to implement the harlequin task of keeping the hawkers at bay.

### **6.6.3 Political environment**

Street vending has had different dynamics as far as the political environment is concerned. Their conflicts with the local authority have shaped how hawkers conduct their business in Thika town. The politics have influenced the allocation of street vending sites in the town, for example, the use of the road reserve on the perimeter wall of Thika stadium. The attempted allocation of street vendors at Mama-Ngina Garden<sup>102</sup> back-fired after long day demonstrations by market traders from Moi market. The allocation of the Moi market in the 1980s to hawkers who used to sell their goods in the streets of Thika marks some of the significant decisions by politicians on vending sites.

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with an Inspectorate officer in Kiambu County on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

<sup>102</sup> Mama Ngina garden is a Public utility in Thika town meant for recreation and is named after the first lady after independence Mama Ngina Kenyatta.

Secondly, political decisions have interfered to a great extent with how the local authorities implement the by-laws that are supposed to govern urban spaces. A good example is how street vendors were tolerated during the 2017 elections, the allocations of street vendors in some sites like the stadium wall, and the attempted allocation at Mama-Ngina Garden. This action triggered the demonstration of market traders in the streets of Thika before vowing not to pay any market fees to the local authorities until the issues of hawkers in the streets of Thika have been addressed. From the beginning of 2018, Moi market traders have not submitted fees to the Thika sub-county. The more than 3,000 traders in the market have denied the local authorities a substantial amount of money that is supposed to be used for service delivery within the Town. The lack of enough revenue is being felt by other departments that might lack tools for implementing their duties.

An example is the enforcement department, where some officers lack field gear to work as expected. An interview with the officers from the department reveals that some members have since left due to non-payment of salaries since September 2018. The overall outcome has been continuing street vending activities in the CBD without much monitoring by the inspectorate team.

The political leadership, especially Kiambu's governorship, has experienced a period of instability for quite some time after the 2017 elections. The Governor is the executive who is overall in charge of the functioning of the county. Before the 2017 elections, the streets and urban spaces systems seemed to work according to Thika residents. Mr.Kamau<sup>103</sup> has been living in Thika since 2005 and commented about the changing face of the town in the recent past...

Before 2015, the streets of Thika were very clean, i.e., there were no congestions on the roads as witnessed today. The Boda Bodas for bicycles and motorcycles knew their stages outside the CBD. Hawking in the streets was under control since most of them used to operate at Moi market. Generally, the town was orderly, and we were proud of our clean and organized town

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<sup>103</sup> Interview on 16/04/2020

The first governor of Kiambu had maintained law and order in Thika town, but in the 2017 elections, the campaigns allowed some freedom in the urban space to win votes from street vendors. The second governor came in with many pre-election promises, especially to street vendors. Some of the promises of allocating street vendors free space at the Mama Ngina garden did not materialize and did not go well with market traders. Another promise that all small businesses would not pay license fees ended up denying the County of Kiambu a lot of revenue. Before stabilizing the administration of the county, the governor was impeached, paving the way for his deputy to take charge in early 2020. the third governor<sup>104</sup> is yet to assert himself but has tolerated street vendors. The tough balancing act between the electorates and the local authority's by-laws seems to force the governor to be lenient with informal traders. In 2020 the daily fees of Ksh.20/- paid by market traders in all the county markets had been waived because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It means that the County government of Kiambu is missing out on important revenue to run its operations. The new governor seems to take a low profile on matters of street vendors as the 2022 general election nears, and he wants to be elected.

## **6.7 Hybrid Economy-Interface between Formal and informal Economy**

From the continuing discussion, it is worth noting the thin line that separates informal and formal economies. These two economies are intertwined, so one cannot tell where the informal-formal relationship starts or ends and forms a continuum (Benjamin et al. 2014; Brown and Lyons 2010, Charmes 2002, Lindell 2010, Racaud 2015). Portes et al.(1989) note that some formal firms hire informal workers to produce goods and services to reduce costs. Various criteria are used to differentiate between the two sectors, e.g., based on size, registration, and payment of taxes. Unfortunately, this criterion does not sufficiently discriminate between formal and informal sector firms. Therefore, the informal sector phenomenon appears to be a continuum of situations defined by a set of factors that we combine to determine the place of each firm in the formality scale (Mbaye and Benjamin, 2014).

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<sup>104</sup> Served as the deputy Governor of Kiambu County but took over the leadership of the county after the impeachment of Governor Ferdinand Waititu by the Members of the county assembly of Kiambu and later the Senate on grounds of corruption on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020

The economic system in Thika seems to be a hybrid between formal and informal sector activities. Lindell (2010) notes that the informal sector refers to economic activities operating outside of state regulation whose boundaries with the formal sector are very thin. It is evidenced by the traders who sell their goods on the semi-permanent structures around the stadium wall and even traders who sell their goods from Mukiriti and Jamhuri Formal markets. Some of these formal traders normally change their selling position during the day and move to join street vendors in the evening in appropriating prime spaces. Other vendors usually own a market stall, but at the same time, hawk in the streets; a good example is Mr. Kimuti, chairperson of the Thika hawkers association. He has two stalls, one along the Thika stadium wall where he sells new and second-hand books, and the other stall is along Kilimambogo road, attended by his wife. In the evenings, Mr. Kimuti sells facemasks and Sanitizers along Commercial Street<sup>105</sup> in front of Gathimaini Chemist. Therefore, he is between formal and informal traders because he pays an annual license fee for his two stalls.

Some vendors also work as distributors to formal enterprises. At the Thika main stage, various wholesalers normally use street vendors to distribute their products. The vendors get the goods from these shops in the morning and then sell them on the streets. During the day, street vendors use the same shop to replenish their stock when it runs out. The hawker will return the unsold items to the formal traders and repeat the same daily routine. Therefore, most of these formal enterprises at the Thika's main stage fully depend on street vendors to distribute their goods.

The formal and informal activities become even more blurred regarding the issue of representation. For an association to be recognized in Kenya, it has to be registered through the Ministry of labor and social protection. The group can visit either Sub-county's labor and social protection offices, Sub-county's Public Service, Youth, and Gender Affairs Offices, or the Huduma center to make the application with the respective officer. The required documents are (a) Groups constitution and (b) the Minutes of the meeting seeking registration and showing the elected official attached to the application forms. (c) List of All members duly signed with Name/Position/ID No and Signatures (d) Copies of National Identity Cards of all group members

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<sup>105</sup> at the junction with Kwame Nkrumah Street

(e) Registration fees receipt. Most street vendor associations have registered this manner, but their street trading activities are not recognized. It becomes ironic because the same local authority recognizes their association.

Street vendors Associations are granted loans by financial institutions such as Banks and Saccos upon registration by the ministry. It is how formal organizations like banks interact directly with informal traders. For street vendors unable to fulfill mainstream banks' conditions like having collateral, Microfinance banks, SACCOs and NGOs come in to fill the gap. One of the main conditions for these financial institutions is for the street vendors to form groups of at least five people. Once street vendors form a group, members can apply for individual loans and are granted using the Grameen Bank model of Co-guaranteeing. Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh founded this model and bank

Through Street vendors' associations, the hawker is represented in meeting with the local authority. Therefore, the association, which represents a person perceived to be informal, interacts with formal organizations like local authorities. In Thika, hawkers who formed Thika Town vendors limited (TTVL) have a representative in the larger Thika Business District Association whenever there is a meeting with the County government of Kiambu. The Thika town vendor's limited association is also a beneficiary of the loans given to them by UNITAS Microfinance Bank in developing rental houses at Kiganjo estate in Thika.

## **6.8 A discussion of the key findings and their implications**

This chapter aimed to extend the discussion from the previous chapter and provide an analysis of how urban spaces are governed in Thika town. Some of the key findings in this chapter were on (i) the governance of urban spaces, (ii) space transition and acquisition by street vendors, (iii) ambiguity that exists in the regulatory and legal framework

### **6.8.1 The governance of urban spaces**

The governance of urban spaces is strongly in the hands of the County administration though other actors like politicians and the street vendors associations have also influenced this governance. One of the ways has been through constructing modern markets and expecting the

street vendors to relocate to this market. These have not borne a lot of success as initially anticipated simply because the streets of Thika are still experiencing a large number of hawkers. There is evidence of the new markets having empty spaces begging the question of if they were necessary in the first place. The findings are not different from other African and Latin American countries like Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa, Peru, and Mexico (Babere, 2013)

It may be interpreted as a case of not consulting the main actor, i.e., the street vendors, before such major projects are undertaken. It begs the question of who sponsors these projects and at whose cost. The construction of these markets in Kiambu has been done through partnerships between the county government of Kiambu and the Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement Project (NaMSIP), which is a World Bank funded Project under the State Department of Nairobi Metropolitan Region in the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, and Urban Development. The other question is whether the sponsors of these projects are getting value for their money. In the long-run such projects end up being like “white elephants,” leaving the country paying up the loan that had been extended to fund such projects. One may also assume that private individuals benefit from the whole project, especially in getting the tenders for the procurement and construction of such markets. The new markets are experiencing common problems like the allocation process on who should be given priority to occupy the stalls. One of the issues is a case of “foreign traders” being allocated spaces rather than those traders who rightfully deserve them (by being the initial traders before the new development). According to the chapter, most of these vendors have opted to return to Thika's streets. These findings are similar to what Hansen (2010) found in Lusaka, Zambia, where limited transparency was observed during allocation to the new markets. It forced many street vendors to re-occupy the streets. Similarly, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, street vendors complained that the allocation of spaces in the newly constructed Machinga complex was flawed. Babere (2013) notes that the distribution of spaces in this new market was allocated to people who were not supposed to be beneficiaries, such as employees in the formal sector. It is further noted that in the case of the Machinga Complex allotment, the formal employees who were allocated were planning to rent out the space once it was fully operational (Babere 2013).



The implication is that as more and more markets are being constructed, street vendors are still on the streets, and therefore these new markets are not sustainable. Cross and Karides (2007) comment on the challenges of new markets in Spain and Mexico and says that; a lack of spaces for street vendors, an increase in the cost by street vendors to access the markets together with limited access to these markets by the customers. These resources may be utilized in another innovative way of settling the street vendors. Secondly, as long as limited transparency still exists, the new market may remain unpopular among street vendors on the allocation of spaces.

### **6.8.2 Space transition and acquisition by street vendors**

The research found that most space transition occurs in the late afternoon between 5 pm and 6 pm. From the interviews, most traders moving into Thika's streets came from Nairobi city and Thika's hinterland. The acquisition and ownership of the space by street vendors depend on how long one has been selling at a particular spot. As noted in the chapter, the acquisition is through invasion, especially on the main commercial street, the busiest in Thika town. Another way of acquiring the space is where there are arrangements between the shop owner and the street vendor who act as security, especially in the evenings when the shopkeeper closes for the day. It becomes a mutual agreement by word of mouth but not necessarily a written contract. The findings also note that the transition to these spaces involves formal traders who have shops and traders in formal markets like Mukiriti and Jamuhuri. The scramble for space in the street is highly competitive as customers have changed their purchasing patterns. These customers are interested in convenience in getting goods and are no longer moving to the formal markets in the evenings due to their security issues. Some of these formal markets are poorly lit in the evening and therefore do not attract customers.

The analysis of these multiple movements to Thika's streets indicates that this pattern is here to stay. Initially, the movement to the street of Thika was mainly done by "foreign traders" (i.e., traders from the other surrounding towns, including Nairobi); today, the traders in Thika who mainly were in Formal markets are joining the streets for additional income. The initial tensions between these two types of traders brought in the concept of "right to the city." Whereas the traders in Thika were fighting to have the "foreign traders" expelled from the city, later they realized that it was in vain and had to also move into the streets. It indicates that if the urban

space can be shared between the formal traders during the day and the informal traders in the evening/night, it will be a win-win for both the local authorities and the street vendors. The same concept of evening markets is noted by Iqbal (2017) in the research on evening markets in Thailand and Malaysia. In his research on the two countries, the author notes that using unused space as a 'venue' of the night market has changed the landscape. The street vendors increased their incomes while making these urban spaces vibrant (Iqbal 2017).

### **6.8.3 Conflicts between various actors**

The research found various conflicts which come into play in the Thika CBD arena. The first conflict is between street vendors and the county government—the main reason for the conflict due to the issue of street vending sites. In Thika, there seems to be no end to this conflict, and the implication is that crackdowns on street vendors will continue. It will be costly to the two actors because the County authority will be pressured to employ more staff to keep law and order. On the other hand, street vendors will continue to lose their goods through impounding and confiscation. More trading time will be wasted with vendors playing a game of cat and mouse with the County Askaris.

The solution to this conflict lies in the space-sharing concept where street vendors can be allowed to work in the evenings at prime areas in the CBD. The County can innovatively use areas such as Mamangina gardens and some sections of the commercial street to allow street vendors to use the spaces at a fee. Any street vendor who wants to trade within these prime areas can be charged Ksh.50/- every evening. The same way taxis pay in the parking area can be applied to street vendors in exchange for amenities such as proper lighting, water, and security in the trading area. The county police can be mobilized near these prime areas to ensure the security of the customers and street vendors. Another condition the county must insist on the traders is the importance of cleaning their trading areas after completing their business in the evening.

The conflict between the local authorities and the political class is a major issue in Thika. The county assemblies (MCA) and members of parliament have formed a very strong alliance with

the street vendors. As mentioned earlier, street vendors are seen as political resources. Therefore, county government employees cannot comfortably punish any hawker who breaks the law. The workers cannot be effective in their work due to fear of losing jobs if they conflict with “hawkers” belonging to a certain influential politician

The conflicts among the various departments within the county council have exposed the county governments enabling the street vendors to take advantage of the situation and appropriate the urban space. A good example is a conflict between the planning and finance departments; street vendors have taken advantage of paying annual permits and selling in corridors and formal traders' verandahs. Lack of coordination is evident in these departments since their actions are conflicting. Regular meetings of these departments and monitoring situation on the ground will reduce the source of conflict

## **6.9 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter highlighted the issues concerning the governance of urban spaces, the vending flows, and the Metropolisation of Thika town. The governance of urban spaces is in the hands of the Sub-county administration. The urban space governance included constructing modern markets for market traders and street vendors. Other ways to demarcate areas for informal activities include permitting temporary usage of some spaces like road reserves and allowing street vendors to appropriate spaces at a given time of the evening.

The construction of the modern market was meant to reduce the number of street vendors, but from the discussion in the chapter, few traders have taken up space. Some spaces have remained empty since the opening of this market. A good example observed is in Juja and Ruiru markets, similar to those at Moi market (Thika town), where an empty stall is yet to be occupied. According to the chapter, various reasons have led to this situation, one of them being that the allocation was biased and that those that deserved the spaces were denied. The allocation of spaces meant that some dissatisfied traders returned to the streets to continue their businesses. Some traders felt that the market design was not convenient for their business as most preferred shades to the story building and was not ready to occupy the upper floors. It might be the same arrangement as the Warwick junction in South Africa, where shades have been constructed.

Demarcating some areas for trading activities is another way that the county government of Kiambu governs the urban spaces. A total of 8 markets within Thika town have been dedicated for this purpose though it was noted in this chapter that some market traders move to the streets in the evening to compete with “foreign” traders. Another way of urban governance of space, especially when dealing with street vendors, was to permit temporary usage of some areas, e.g., the perimeter of Thika municipal stadium and also spaces alongside Kisii street, which is meant for Car parking. The last method allowed street vendors to start their operations from 5 pm onwards. This compromise resulted from an influx of street vendors from the hinterlands of Thika and Nairobi.

The chapter also highlighted the space transition and acquisition by street vendors. The transition from formal markets to the streets was gaining traction among most market traders who wanted additional customer income. Most customers were not ready to enter the market in the evening because of the distance and security. Space acquisition and ownership in the streets depended on the frequency of trading in the same spot for a long period. It also depended on the first person to trade in the spot or, if in a verandah, the agreement between the street vendor and the shop owner. The usage of these spaces led to conflicts between various actors, for example, a conflict between street vendors and local authorities on the usage of space during the beautification program and between local authorities and politicians during the general elections. Furthermore, a conflict between different departments of the County, like the Finance department and the Planning Department, on issuing a permit for the use of space by street vendors. Other conflicts exist between street vendors and supermarkets, plus conflicts between formal traders' associations and street vendors.

The chapter also identified ambiguity that exists in the regulatory and legal framework. While the Constitution of Kenya 2012 seems to have granted its citizens some rights, the local by-laws contradict these rights. The local by-laws also seem to be contradicting Kenya's blueprint Vision 2030. The chapter concludes by identifying the three-factor that has affected the process of Metropolisation in Thika town. It includes a high rate of urbanization, Tolerance by the regulatory framework, and political environment.



## **.Chapter 7-General conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Towards the end of 2015, the Central Business District of Thika town experienced a large inflow of street vendors from the surrounding areas, as indicated in an interview with various actors. The local authorities have tried to control this influx of hawkers by using various strategies but with mixed results. This study focused on how street vendors link cities, secondary towns, rural areas, and the sometimes-outside world through trade routes to earn their livelihood. It also considered the struggle for the appropriation of prime spaces in urban areas by street vendors and how these prime areas are used as economic and political resources. The research focused on how street vendors face different regulations while interacting with different actors at different scales while earning their livelihood. Thika's CBD provided the perfect theatre for this struggles of urban space from different actors

Extensive analysis of the invasion of street vendors in the urban spaces has been done, and how such activities have posed a challenge to the formal traders with shops in the CBD. This invasion has also affected market traders in the formal market and local authorities in their quest to manage urban spaces. These struggles have shaped the landscape in Thika town and the surrounding rural areas together with the capital city Nairobi. This research has confirmed the lack of collaboration between the local authorities and the political environment, allowing the street vendors to take advantage of the conflict to continue operating in urban spaces.

Guided by three objectives, the research has tried to answer all of them based on the methodology used to collect the data. The first research objective was "To find out the extent to which street vendors' flow contribute to Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and its hinterland." From the discussion in chapter 4, it is worth noting that the flows of street vendors have been noted at a different scale. The flow of street vendors has been occurring at different times and locations. From interviews conducted by street vendors, some come as far as Nairobi County to trade in Thika for different reasons. The excessive force applied to street vendors by the authorities in Nairobi has directed some to Thika town, where the local authority is "less tough." The brutality faced by street vendors previously in Eastleigh and Nairobi's CBD

meant that some hawkers had opted to vend in Thika. The accessibility of Thika Superhighway makes it easier to travel to Thika and back to Nairobi faster. The direct Matatu routes between the major markets in Nairobi to Thika have made transporting goods convenient and faster; for example, passenger vehicles move from Gikomba and Eastleigh directly to Thika town. Movement between Thika to Kamukunji market (in Nairobi) is easier because one can descend from the Matatu en route to the city center.

To some vendors, the profits realized in Thika were much more than when one was selling the same products in Nairobi. In this case, the argument is that customers in Nairobi can access goods in Gikomba and Eastleigh at a lower price than street vendors. In this case, street vendors prefer selling the goods in the streets of Thika rather than in Nairobi to fetch higher profits. For vendors dealing with agricultural products, Thika remains their best option because of higher purchasing power from customers. All these factors have maintained the flows between Nairobi and Thika intact, leading to integration between the metropolitan areas.

The large population in Thika, which doubled between 2009 and 2019, i.e., from 136 576 to 279,429, provides a bigger market for street vendors' products. For some farmers cum street vendors from the hinterland (Murang'a specifically), despite the distance and crackdown by county askaris, Thika remains the best market for agricultural goods. For the wholesalers who normally bring potatoes and cabbages from Nyandarua, there is less bureaucracy when selling products in Thika than in Nairobi (Wakulima market). In chapter 4, a wholesaler-cum vendor is quoted saying...

*I prefer to bring my potatoes to Thika's Madaraka market because there are no brokers and one can sell their goods rather than in Nairobi, where one must sell through potatoes brokers who take a bigger profit margin*

The flows of goods from formal markets in Thika also enhance the Metropolisation process of rural areas to cities through the secondary town. The street vendors easily distribute most of the agricultural produce in the Madaraka market, like onions from Tanzania, cabbages, potatoes from Nyandarua, and parts of Mau in the rift valley. Good examples are street vendors who

normally sell agricultural products at an alley between the Main Thika stage and Commercial Street in the heart of Thika, as shown in photo 35.

*Photo 39 Fresh Agricultural products at an alley near Commercial Street*



(Source: Author 2020)

Hawkers spread in nearly every street in Thika and distribute the groundnuts imported from Malawi to the Jamhuri market faster than wholesalers. It has been confirmed by the number of street vendors spread over the streets of Thika's CBD and the wholesalers who sell to them (street vendors) at Jamhuri market.

The influence of political clientelism, which normally happens during the election, brought more traders from other towns, especially from Nairobi, to support a certain candidate. In Kenya, moving potential voters from one part of the country to another is common to increase the support base. Most street vendors from other towns were promised to trade freely in Thika in exchange for their votes and therefore had to move their voting station to Thika.



Therefore, the inconspicuous spaces in the streets of Thika connect the hinterlands and the city of Nairobi with bordering countries such as Tanzania and Malawi through the sale of onions and groundnuts, respectively. The importation of cheap products from China or Dubai finds their way to rural areas via Kamukunji, Eastleigh, or Gikomba through the streets of Thika, which connect these villages to the trade routes. The street vendors flow therefore played a very significant role in these linkages and integration of the rural areas, secondary towns, cities, and beyond the borders of Kenya.

The second objective aimed to determine how street trading regulation affects Metropolisation and the linkage between secondary towns and their hinterland. In this thesis, regulations on the activities of street vendors have been applied at different scales. The regulatory framework entailed the Acts of Parliament, parliament bills, and by-laws. The regulations also apply to the action of some actors; for example, the leaders of street vendors' associations regulate how members conduct themselves. The constitution of different street vendor associations regulates how their operations are undertaken.

Several acts of parliament, like The Urban areas and cities Act 2011, Environmental management and co-ordination act 2012, Micro and small enterprise Act 2012, and The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill 2019, have had a bearing on the regulation of street vending activities. From the field interviews, most street vendors were ignorant of the existing laws meant to regulate and protect them. Associations like KENASVIT were aware of this regulation because of the regular meetings with their members. The major challenge associations face in creating awareness about various laws is low membership. In Thika, only 21% of the street vendors interviewed belong to these associations, and therefore a lot of ignorance about laws affecting their operations.

The local authorities used the by-laws to regulate the activities in the urban spaces of Thika. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the use of Nuisance law bans street vending is used to evict any informal traders on the pavements of Thika. The same law has forced most street vendors to move from Nairobi to Thika, as some evening street vendors would admit. Though the same laws are administered in the two towns, street vendors who come to Thika in the evening

admitted that it is tougher in Nairobi. An interview with the Kiambu inspectorate admitted that the same law is applied diplomatically in Thika.

The regulations which seem to favor informal trading, like the MSE Act of 2012, are still “silent” in Thika, like in other towns in Kenya where the implementation is still pending, as noted by Mr. Kwache, the chairperson of KENASVIT in Kenya. The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood) Bill, 2019 is yet to be passed as a law in the senate and therefore leaves the street vendors regulation in the hands of local authorities. The Environmental Management and co-ordination act 2012 implemented in Thika bans the littering of the streets and noise pollution. These are two areas where street vendors are accused of committing, and their activities remain banned within the CBD. The act's implementation further affects street vendors' activities in Thika's urban spaces.

The trader's associations have also regulated street vendors in Thika. In this context, there is formal traders associations, formal market traders associations, and street vendors association. The formal traders association in the town is Thika Business District Association (TBDA) and has influenced the way street vending activities have been undertaken in the town. The association, which is very close to the local authority, has raised the issue of uncontrolled street vending in Thika town. The pressure on the local authority has forced street vendors to devise a way of surviving by coming to Thika in the evening. TBDA has advocated constructing vending stalls at the Mama-Ngina Garden to eliminate all hawkers roaming the streets. According to the TBDA, these stalls will be the best way to regulate the activities of hawkers, but the market traders' associations have been against this strategy. The market traders associations, especially for Moi Market, have always advocated for clearing hawkers in the streets and taking to Moi market with more space. For the Moi market traders associations, moving street vendors to the CBD (Mama-Ngina Garden) will completely kill the market because everybody (Customers and traders) will move to Mama-Ngina Garden. The traders in the market once demonstrated in Thika to condemn any plans to move street vendors to Mama-Ngina Garden, being in the CBD. Perhaps the street vendors' associations have also been able to regulate the members through the constitutions of the group. Associations such as Thika Town vendors Limited (TTVL) have secured their members' vending sites. Regulations on who is supposed to trade in a particular

area have been well outlined, together with requirements to maintain site cleanliness. The association has a representative in the committee of TBDA and therefore has been able to push for some agendas concerning its members. Although the regulations by street vendors association have been felt to a certain extent, their effectiveness has been affected by low membership, as earlier mentioned.

Overall, the regulations of street vending in Thika have had their challenges. First, the by-laws applied by the local authority and the parliamentary acts (e.g., MSE Act 2012) seem to create an ambiguity to the disadvantage of the street vendors. Secondly, the regulations of street vending activities have appeared to be lenient to the hawkers due to the conflict between the local authority and the political class. The implementers of these bylaws have been at the whims of the politicians, and therefore regulating street vendors has not been very effective to the advantage of street vendors. This conflict has led to many street vendors from neighboring cities like Nairobi taking advantage and moving to Thika town, especially in the evening. The number of street vendors appropriating spaces in Thika town has been huge and sometimes overwhelming the enforcement team. The regulations in Thika have generally been a bit relaxed, which has enabled street vending to continue thriving and therefore attracting more hawkers from the surrounding towns.

The third objective was to determine the actors in this street vendors' flow, their contributions to Metropolisation, and the linkage between secondary towns and their hinterland. Several actors were identified and contributed to the Metropolisation process to answer this objective. The actors were classified as either public or private. Public actors were considered the two levels of government (National and County Government) and the political environment. The public actors have the power to formulate the legislation and implementation laws that impact the operations of the street vendors in the urban space.

The public actors operate at a different scale, with the National government, through the parliament, enacting laws that have significantly affected street vendors' operations. The same National government is in charge of security agencies like the police in cases where the County government may need a backup in case of a crackdown involving governance of urban space. Some of the Acts of parliament enacted to benefit the street vendors have had challenges during

implementation, for example, the Micro and small enterprise Act 2012. When fully implemented, the clauses in this act will change the informal sector for the better. On the other hand, the county Government has the power to formulate the laws that govern the urban spaces through the County Governments Act of 2012. Some of the by-laws were maintained by the County governments from the defunct Local governments. These laws include nuisance law which has banned the operations of street vendors in urban spaces.

Politicians as public actors have contributed to street vending activities in urban spaces. As mentioned in chapter 2, street vendors become political resources during elections. Hawkers represent vote banks and are therefore allowed to undertake their businesses on the streets without harassment from the county enforcement team. The politicians become a buffer zone between the Local authority and the street vendors. The street vendors are fully aware of the arrangements and therefore take advantage to sell their products before the election campaign is over. The struggle for power in the governorship of Kiambu County between the governor and his deputy brought some instability that allowed street vendors to take advantage. The new constitution placed the governor as the head of the operation of the local authority. Therefore any instability in the county's top leadership means that some tasks, such as urban spaces, may not be effectively managed. As noted earlier, the action of the enforcement team and other departments is normally at the sitting Governor's whims. Meanwhile, the street vendors will continue taking advantage of the conflict between the politicians and the local authority as far as urban spaces are concerned. Thika, therefore, continues to attract more vendors from the surrounding towns as a place for ease of doing business to those in the rural areas and Nairobi.

The private actor's contribution to the street vending activities in the urban spaces of Thika town has been significant. Thika residents have been complaining about the congestion and untidiness brought about by the invasion of street vendors in the town. Ironically from a sample of residents interviewed, 70% buy goods from street vendors because of the convenience offered and cheap products. Therefore Thika residents, alongside commuters, offer a market for street vending, meaning that the trade continues to expand, especially in the evening market.

The street vendors' associations have addressed their members' advocacy and welfare issues. The Thika Town Vendors Limited and KENASVIT have been able to lobby for the vending sites to

their members, meaning that unlike in the past, some street vendors have a site for their operation. Working hours have been negotiated, too, allowing the street vendors to operate from 5 pm. This hour coincides with local authorities closing their offices and commuters heading home, attracting many hawkers from other towns to come and work within the Thika urban spaces. Formal traders associations like TBDA have consistently tried to eliminate the street vendors in the urban areas, but it seems like the efforts are not bearing any fruit. The rival Moi market traders associations have opposed the efforts of TBDA because of being perceived to favour a group of hawkers who wanted to occupy Mama-Ngina Garden. The war of words between these two associations has allowed the hawkers to take advantage and continue their activities in Thika's streets.

On the other hand, the supermarkets have had to contend with many street vendors in their verandahs or entry points. Unlike the hypothesis that street vendors compete with supermarkets, the managers of the three main supermarkets along Commercial Street have different opinions. The hawkers are viewed as playing a complementary role, like attracting more customers to the supermarket. The street vendors also buy goods from the supermarkets before the close of their evening business.

Institutions of higher learning, like universities and colleges, have also played in the street vending business. These institutions have provided the market to street vendors, and the students have been selling in the streets. Many university and college students from various parts of the country have provided Thika with more residents and traders. It is because, from the interviews conducted with these students, many have chosen to remain in Thika town even after graduating from their institution. Street vending, to some, has been their first job awaiting to be absorbed in formal employment later.

The transporters, including Matatus, Buses, Tuk Tuks, and Boda-bodas, have boosted street vending because they moved these traders from different points to Thika's CBD with their merchandise. Most street vendors come from neighboring towns, and transporters have provided the means through which Thika has become accessible.

The financial institutions have boosted the activities of the hawkers, especially by giving loans to street vendor associations. Whereas street vendors were perceived as not an organized group, the opposite is true. Street vendors are among the most organized groups, especially on welfare and the most recent advocacy issues. The financial institutions, through loans, are funding informal groups, especially on development. The confidence shown by the financial institutions, especially in Thika, means that street vending as a business is here to stay.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

### **7.2.1 Policy, Legal and Institutional Level**

First, one area of conflict identified affecting street vending is urban governance. From the interview conducted and observation, it is evident that street vendors are less included in the urban management of Thika, and at most, only an association that represents formal enterprises is involved.

The recommendation would be that all actors identified in this thesis should be included in the decision-making as far as the urban governance of Thika is concerned. Including some actors and excluding others will continue to build tension in the streets of Thika. As Tuju (2019) notes, for the sustainability of better urbanism in most developing countries like Kenya, the “urban majority” should be included in urban governance and discard the elitist agenda (as cited from Anyamba 2006). Street vendors and their associations should therefore be included in this governance as the major players in urban management even as a right stipulated in the Urban and Cities act of 2011. Due to their small members, some of the reasons why street vendor associations are not found at the negotiating table with the local authorities and other stakeholders. The street vendors associations should therefore strive to bring on board as many hawkers as possible to have an impact when negotiating and lobbying for spaces; the Shoe Shiners Union of Mexico City filed a complaint at the city’s Human Rights Commission about the eviction of their members at Glorieta de Insurgentes Square park. They were successful in getting the shoe shiners back to work. Therefore the Street vendors association should consider revising subscription fees to attract as many members as possible. From the findings in this

research, only 21% of the sampled street vendors belonged to the associations, and the story is not different from Nairobi, where Kamunyori (2007) got a representation of between 15-23%. One of the major reasons for not joining the associations was subscription fee was a bit high in some associations and, therefore, not possible to enter.

In some cases, the misuse of the subscription was why most members were leaving the associations. The association can also extend services (as explained in Chapter 3, section 3.8) to other street vendors who are nonmembers. It may be a way of attracting them and, more so, forming a formidable organization like those in India and Mexico, which have a lot of influence on urban governance

Secondly, one of the major issues discussed in this research appertains the regulations of street vendors, especially on the By-laws applied by the local authorities in governing the urban space. Most of these laws have been inherited from the colonial period and, therefore, hardly have any input from the street vendors. It's worth noting that the problem might emanate from the application by the planners and the architects of the urban areas. The street vending patterns are not incorporated in the urban designs; therefore, informal activities are not included when planners and the city's architects are designing the urban areas. Thus when the By-laws of these towns are made, street vending is deemed illegal since it is not in the Master plans of these cities and towns. The Thika town planner would admit that in the current plan, there are no specific areas allocated for street vending activities apart from road reserves that are informally being accepted for the purpose.

The recommendations, in this case, will be that the city planning curriculums can consider street vending as one of the land use patterns in towns. When curriculum developers integrate street vending, future developments in towns will reflect these activities and have sites reserved for the same. The professionals (Planners and architects) will have to learn how street vendors operate; therefore, future policies will be shaped by what is in the curriculum. Currently, there is no known manual for street designs in Kenya where users of the streets are allowed to give their proposals. In developed countries such as Britain and New Zealand, residents can air their views on how street designs affect them during implementation (Moriango2017). The inclusion of

street vendors' opinions on the design of the urban areas and possibly curriculum design will ensure they are part of the urban landscape and not just an afterthought.

The conflict between local authorities and street vendors has been the application of By-laws, which are either too punitive or unknown to street vendors. The recommendation will be to review some of these by-laws to recognize the heterogeneous nature of street vending. Street vendors differ in their operations; for example, we have some who operate from fixed locations while some are mobile, and others normally work at different times. It means that each of these street vendors faces different challenges, and therefore the by-laws applied by the County government should not treat them the same way. To solve this issue, the County government should collaborate with the street vendors association to review the existing laws and the implementation of the new laws. When street vendors feel part of the formulation/implementation of the rules, they will be obligated to obey them. Most street vendors violate laws because of ignorance and not being involved in their formulation because some were from the colonial period.

Lastly, another problem identified in the street vending activities are being treated as illegal by the Sub-county government. The numerous crackdowns still conducted by the authorities testify that street vending is still unrecognized as an alternative to formal employment.

The recommendation is that the local authorities in Thika consider street vending as an emerging global trade system and an alternative for reducing unemployment in urban areas. The local authorities should therefore reconsider their policies which declare street vending activities as illegal and unwanted development. Since most of the urban plans adopted in Thika are still based on the foreign policies of creating a “modern city” through activities such as beautification, an opinion from the informal sector should also be considered regarding the use of urban public space. The planning department should incorporate the needs of street vendors into urban designs to incorporate them in the Thika town landscape.



### **7.2.2 Vending Site level solutions**

One of the major strengths of street vending is its ability to distribute goods from formal enterprises and even between different towns surrounding Thika town and its hinterland. A good example is how groundnuts from Malawi are distributed at a faster rate by street vendors within the streets of Thika compared to large-scale retailers. The Onions from Tanzania find their way into the streets of Thika Town. Also, how goods exported from China and Dubai find their way to Thika from Eastleigh/Kamukunji through street vendors. This long value chain has created more jobs for street vendors and other stakeholders within this chain.

To enhance this connectivity and job creation, the Sub-County government of Thika should consider a space-sharing concept; where street vendors can legally be allowed to occupy prime areas in the evening. Their coming to Thika, especially from 5 pm, has completely changed the town's landscape. These evening markets can be extended into late nights if the local authority can provide enough lighting and security for both the customers and the traders. Essentially, it might create a “night market,” which can translate into a 24-hour economy. It will lead to job creation and maximum use of the urban space. With Vision 2030 targeting an average growth of 10% per annum (as noted in section 2.8), the evening markets will be part of the solution. The 24-hour city economy raises a wide range of policy issues and challenges. However, the most important challenge is to find ways of encouraging and enabling its positive aspects while regulating and limiting its problems. Some of the policy issues and challenges that need to be addressed in Thika include security; mobility; inclusiveness; change of behavior and attitude; city by-laws, labour laws, ethical issues; investment in supportive infrastructure; and the role of all stakeholders. In return, the street vendors may be asked to give a small fee for the night markets and, therefore, a win-win for the local authorities, street vendors, customers, and other stakeholders.

Mama Ngina gardens in Thika can be one of the public spaces where night markets can be conducted. The park is known to hold various exhibitions sponsored by multiple organizations in Thika. A good example is the annual exhibition of locally manufactured products which lasts for a week. These exhibitions attract many customers who buy multiple items during this event. Media max (a local media company) normally conducts educational fairs in the same venue,

attracting hundreds of students from various institutions of higher learning. At the end of the year, the same venue host the famous “Thika Christmas Expo,” where different traders and farmers exhibit their products. It attracts many customers from as early as 8 Am to 8 pm over the last weekend to the Christmas and New year's celebrations. The advantage of Mama-Ngina gardens is its central location in Thika’s CBD. The same venue can host various street vendors in the evenings, especially from 6 pm throughout the night. As mentioned earlier, Thika's sub-county government can provide enough street lighting because facilities such as water and Toilets are available. The advantage of this venue is its proximity to the various matatu stages and about 1.3km to the Thika police station in case of security issues. The night traders can pay a small fee which will go a long way in cleaning the garden and ensuring its maintenance. The traders can use the streets around this market(Mama Ngina drive) as motor vehicle traffic can be redirected along Kenyatta highway and Uhuru street. During the day, the same gardens can be put in their normal usage. Yemmafouo (2018) suggests the same by emphasizing that, designing the sharing of commercial streets to diverse groups of street sellers and other users of the same public area could be one answer to the issues of competing interests and the complexity of street hawking. It will be a perfect example of how the same space can be used in different ways during daytime and nighttime. This arrangement will also benefit customers who will conveniently pick up their Matatus on their way home because of the garden’s proximity to the Matatu stages. To the market traders who complain about the usage of the Mama Ngina gardens for commercial activities, there will be no cause for alarm as the market will only be utilized at night long after the formal markets have closed. Mukiriti market, Jamuhuri market, and Madaraka normally end their day at 6 pm as per the public market regulations.

Secondly, another major challenge of Thika town has been the lack of enough spaces within the CBD. One recommendation will be utilizing some spaces at the backdrop and the shelter provided by boundary fences, such as Thika Stadium or fences around Salvation Army school for the blind to accommodate informal traders. The use of spaces on the perimeter wall of the Thika stadium has housed street vendors though not at its maximum. The spaces occupied are not standard, i.e., some spaces are bigger than others. The street vendors have designed their stalls and therefore utilized more spaces. The county government can come up with standard

stalls or canopies that will create visual uniformity improving the aesthetical quality of street vendor sites and at the same time accommodating more traders than at the moment, where only 60 are accommodated, as noted in chapter five.

Similarly, stalls can also surround Christina Gardens. Still, the kiosk should face Uhuru Street, Commercial Street, Kenyatta Highway, and Kwame Nkrumah streets, similar to Mama-Ngina Garden. It should be strictly done in consultation with all the stakeholders who will, including the leadership of market traders and street vendors, to avoid a situation like what happened in 2018, where Moi market traders demonstrated the invasion of Mama-Ngina Garden by “foreign street vendors.”

Another space lying idle is land between the Thika district commissioner’s office and the County government offices, where the road reserves can be utilized for this purpose. Another model can be adopted, like in Nairobi, where traders are allowed to use Supreme Court car parking on weekends: In Thika, this can be done at Juja sub-county offices near the Kiambu Huduma center opposite the Thika stadium gate. This space can be utilized on weekends and will end up giving the Thika sub-county some revenues when it’s not used on weekends. This model works perfectly well in Nairobi and can work in Thika town.

Thirdly, the construction of Modern markets in Kiambu County seems to be facing some challenges in terms of occupancy. Some of the newest markets, like Juja and Ruiru, are still facing the challenge of being fully occupied. Most traders who were supposed to settle them are back in Thika's streets, leaving these markets “empty,” as shown in previous chapter five photo 27. The challenge has been the procedures for allocating trading areas and the fees charged to traders in these markets. Plans are underway to construct a similar model in the Madaraka market. A similar scenario observed in the surrounding markets(Juja and Ruiru) might be replicated if care is not taken.

The recommendations here will be that the county government should listen to the traders' opinions in this market. From the data collected and interviews of these market traders, most believe that stalls should be done on the ground instead of doing a story building and take a similar structure of the Warwick junction in South Africa, Muthurwa, or Wakulima market in

Nairobi. The reasoning is that most customers do not have time to keep moving up and down the staircase. The preference for stalls is because visibility is an important feature of street vendors' locational decisions. Akolade (2017) notes that when making facilities for street vendors, especially their sites, it is essential to mimic the elements of spatiality. Therefore for street vendors maintaining eye-level contact is very critical. The emphasis, in this case, is to avoid vertically stacked spaces that are not accessible directly from the street level. It is the concept behind the success of the Warwick junction success story in Durban, South Africa. Whereas levels not only matter but also convenience, location, and time, the County authorities should consider locating such stalls along the sidewalks of Kenyatta Highway, Stadium road, and some parts of Commercial Street. These streets still have many reserves that can accommodate street vendors' stalls. These roads have high human traffic as they are connected to the Bus and Matatu terminus and will facilitate interaction opportunities between customers and street vendors.

### **7.3 Areas for further research**

This research has focused on street vending and pavement politics in the Metropolisation of Thika town. There are many aspects of street vending that could not possibly be exhausted by this study alone. Therefore this study opens the way for further research activities to expand knowledge in another area as required. Hence further research can start from where this study ends to Analyse the recommendations proposed, for example, critically

- 1) The sustainability of the new modern markets in Kiambu County in the face of increasing street vending activities.
- 2) How can street vending in the evening be sustained to accommodate more traders and probably extend in the morning for possibilities of a 24-hour economy in Thika? Studying the sustainability of evening street vending would be useful in providing information on managing and controlling the issues resulting from this new landscape in the town.



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*Appendix 1: Interview Questions for street vendors*

1. In which age bracket are you in among the following brackets?

15-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51 and above

2. Have you worked before in a different job?
3. Where did you work before moving to your present space?
4. Are there other people who use the space in your absence?
5. If Yes, Who are they? What do they do with it?
6. How did you know about this space?
7. How did you acquire this space?
8. If allowed by the land owner/shop owner, what type of arrangement do you have with them
9. Do you have a contract with the owner?
10. For how long are you allowed to use this space?
11. Have you had any disputes with the current landowner?
12. What was the main reason/s for the dispute?
13. Would you regard space acquisition as easy?
14. Are you comfortable moving to another place in the future?
15. What sort of space would you prefer to move to?
16. How often do you work here?
17. What was the main source of funds for your business?
18. If you applied for the loan from the bank/SACCOS, how long did it take?
19. If the authority inspects this space, what do they take?
20. If you bribe the inspector, can you continue with business?
21. How much do you pay as a bribe?
22. Are you aware of the regulations which govern your activity?
23. Are you satisfied with the regulations?
24. If you are dissatisfied with these regulations, what is the reason for your dissatisfaction?
25. Do you think that the concerned authority should allow traders to work freely?
26. Are you a member of a street traders' organization?
27. Do you think informal street vendors are well represented within the Local authority?
28. Do you think informal street vendors are adequately represented within the street traders' organization?
29. If you were given an alternative job, would you still opt for street trading activity?

*Appendix 2: Main interview questions for revenue officer in Thika sub-county*

1. a) How many small businesses (SMEs) are registered within Thika town?  
  
b) How many of these are considered informal traders enterprises?
2. How many licenses do you offer the informal enterprise operators within a month?
3. Which license type do you offer, and which policy supports this provision?
4. Do you still offer a hawking license? .....Under what provision?
5. What are the requirements for one to get a business license?
- 6a) Is it the same for both formal and informal?  
  
b) If not, what are the requirements for informal businesses?
7. What criteria do you use in determining how much you charge per Business when issuing a license?
8. How does your department relate to informal trader's associations (such as KENASVIT or Thika Business District Association)?
9. What are the main challenges of managing Thika's informal economy and public space, especially regarding revenue collection?
- 10 a) How are public spaces in Thika managed?  
  
b) Which departments are in charge of managing public spaces?
- 11 a) Which regulations govern public spaces and street trading activities?  
  
b) How long has this regulation been in existence?  
  
c) What prompted their enactment/creation?
12. How have things changed in Thika's public spaces and the movement of traders since the creation of county Governments?
13. a) What is this government's long-term vision for Thika, especially in revenue collection from informal traders?



b) What is your department's strategy to achieve this?

c) What is your personal view about Thika, public spaces, and the informal economy?

**Thank you for your responses**

*Appendix 3: Main interview questions for Customers in Thika Town*

1. Where do most customers go for their shopping needs?
2. Is the place they go to within the estate or in the CBD?
3. Why do they shop at the place they go to?
4. What goods and services do you get from the planned shopping center?
5. Which is your preferred area of shopping?
6. Is the presence of informal economic activities within Thika's CBD a good idea?
7. What do you think has led to the emergence of informal business activities?
8. What is good about these activities in the CBD?
9. What is not good for such activities within the CBD?
10. What should be done to deal with the issue of informal traders?

*Appendix 4 Interview Questions for Thika inhabitants/Residents/Dwellers*

1.1 Do you vote in within Thika town during the general elections?

1.2 How often do you go through Thika's CBD?

1.3 What do you think of the street trading in the CBD and the movement of traders from other towns to Thika?

1.4 How has the invasion of Thika's CBD (by street vendors), and the movement of Street traders affected you?

Please explain

1.5 Are the activities of street traders within Thika Town of any benefit to you?

Why?

1.6 Do street traders cause you any problems?

If Yes, what type of problems? .....

1.7 Have you bought anything from a street trader in the last month?

Why? .....

1.8 Do you buy from street traders because their goods are cheaper?

1.9 When do you think the invasion of street vendors started in Thika, especially in the evenings?

1.10 Do you think street trading was well managed in Thika before this invasion?

Why.....

1.11 Do you think street trading and the movement of street traders are well managed now?

Why? .....

1.12 Do you think commercial activities should be undertaken along the street, sidewalks, bus stations, and other easily accessible public spaces?.....

Why.....

1.13 Do you think the street traders in Thika's CBD should be allowed to remain in their current locations in any form?

Why.....

## **2. Additional Information**

2.1 In your own opinion, what is an ideal town.....

2.2 Do you think a town without street vendors makes the city more vibrant and lively, or does it make it dirty and disorganized?

2.3 Is there anything else you want to say about street trading/trading in publicly accessible spaces? .....

**Thank you for your responses**

*Appendix 5 interview questions for the enforcement officer*

1. a) Briefly describe your duties as an enforcement officer in Thika
- b) What are the procedures for anybody found doing business illegally in the streets of Thika?
2. Are informal activities, especially street vending, allowed in Thika's town?.....

Give reasons

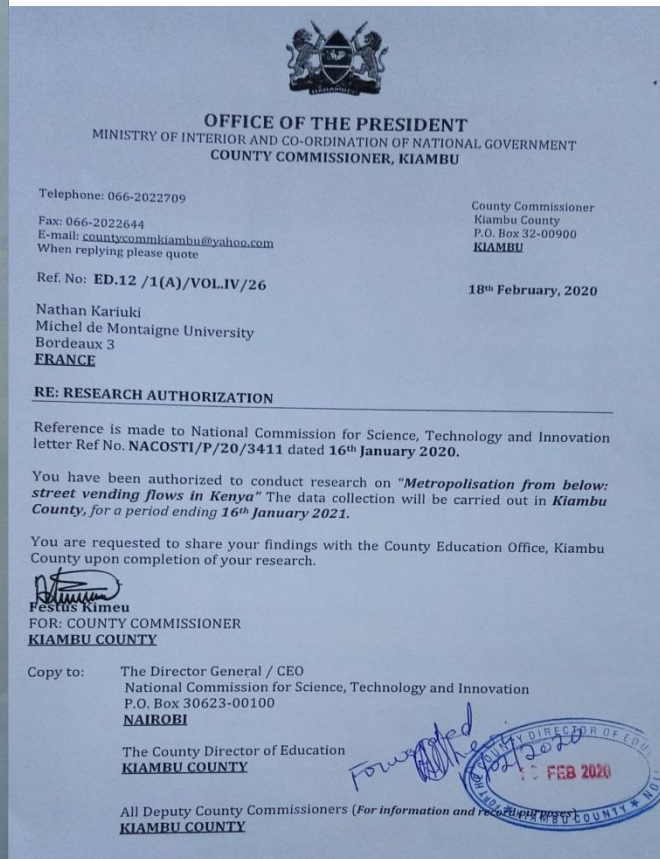
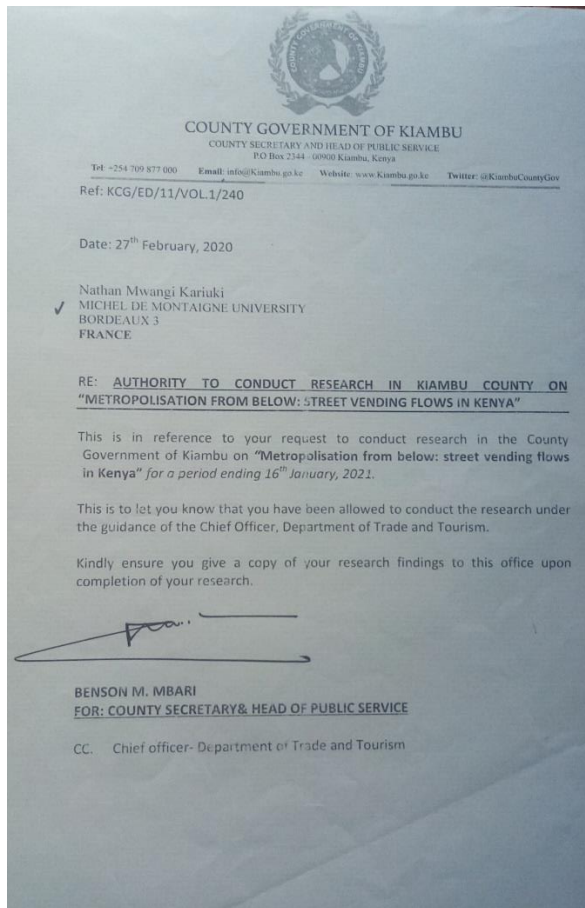
3. a) Please outline the laws which govern informal activities in Thika town
- b) Comment on the relevance of policies and regulations on the street vending in the era of devolution in the country.
4. What are the reasons for the increase in street vending activities in the recent past?
5. Do you think it's possible to meet the town's demand for space for informal activities?
6. How are spaces for informal livelihood activities controlled in Thika town?
7. What steps have you taken to address the intensification of informal activities in Thika town?
8. What actions are in place to address the issue of the impacts of informal activities in Thika town?
9. What will be the best way of addressing issues concerning informal livelihood activities in Thika Town?
10. According to your experience and expertise, can we integrate Street vending into Formal activities?  
If yes, how.....
11. Are there areas within Thika town, in your opinion, that is suitable for street vendors?
12. While enforcing laws in the streets and planning your duties, do you involve leaders of street vendors?  
If yes, how.....

13. Who are the other stakeholders involved in enforcing the law within Thika town?
14. What are the main challenges in the daily duties?
15. Suggest how Street vending can be planned and organized within the urban setting as a law enforcer

#### Appendix 4: Research Permit from NACOSTI

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p><b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b></p>
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*Appendix 5: Research Authorization from the County Government of Kiambu and the National Government*





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