

Research Report

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Urban livelihoods and gender transformation in Dar es Salaam



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Executive Summary

This report draws on data that was collected during 7-weeks of qualitative research undertaken between May-July 2017 in Dar es Salaam, as part of my Master's Research project and as a pilot study for my PhD. The research aimed to understand more about the diverse informal livelihoods within Dar es Salaam, and the extent to which these are shaped by gender relations. The study was predominately informed through conducting 18 semi-structured interviews with both professionals and informal workers, although ongoing observations and one focus group/participatory diagramming session were also utilised within this study.

This report provides a contemporary overview of informality within Dar es Salaam and identifies that informal work is becoming increasingly dominant due to a lack of formal job availability, combined with a lack of welfare provisions provided by the national government due to widespread cutbacks. Although many individuals resort to informal employment as a means of survival, this study also uncovered other motivations for undertaking informal work, which were related to wider issues such as national/continental hunger and poverty. Despite these motivations, this research identified in line with academic literature, that informality within Dar es Salaam is predominately characterised by unpredictability and vulnerability and is mostly undertaken for subsistence purposes.

Moreover, this study also highlights that due to mounting economic pressures, gender roles and relations in Dar es Salaam are changing. Both men and women are starting to undertake work and roles that traditionally they would not have done. For example, men can now be found working in areas of food processing and textiles, and women are undertaking work in construction and motor mechanics. As daily life becomes increasingly challenging, traditional gendered boundaries are beginning to blur as jobs and roles must now be done out of necessity rather than through choice or tradition.

This report offers several recommendations on how informal workers could be supported:

- The national government should consider adopting a more participatory approach towards informal workers, by developing policies and initiatives that are well informed.
- Greater cooperation is needed – there is a lot of good localised work being undertaken across Dar es Salaam, however organisations struggle to scale up their efforts due to a lack of funds and resources.
- Organisations should collaborate and pool together their expertise and resources to support informal workers.
- Organisations should ask informal workers 'what would help them the most', so that their resources are used effectively.
- Trainings and skills provided to informal workers must be up to date and market relevant.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and research questions

This report is a condensed version of my master's thesis, which was written after conducting 7 weeks of fieldwork in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 2017. The overarching aim of this study was to understand more about the different informal livelihoods within Dar es Salaam and how these are shaped by gender relations. This was done by exploring and assessing the opportunities and benefits, as well as the disadvantages and constraints, that men and women have experienced through their engagement in the informal sector. Furthermore, research was conducted with non-governmental organisation (NGO's), government stakeholders and community-based organisations (CBO's) to understand the level of support informal workers receive within Dar es Salaam.

The following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the benefits and opportunities, if any, of informality within Dar es Salaam? What are the constraints/disadvantages?
2. To what extent are informal workers supported within Dar es Salaam?
3. To what extent are gendered tasks, work and responsibilities changing in the urban context?

The report is divided into 4 sections: introduction, methodology, main research findings and recommendations. These sections will address the aims and research questions stated above, and towards the end of the report recommendations are given which will be of use and benefit to professionals who support informal workers.

1.2 The research motivation

Tanzania was chosen as a research location because it has been identified that 82.8% of women and 70.9% of men work within the informal sector (ILO, 2013). This is important, because it not only identifies the extent of informality within Tanzania, but it also highlights that women undertake the largest proportion of informal work. Briefly, it is crucial to recognise that landmark research on informality has identified that women are often concentrated in low-paid and low-quality forms of homebased informal work, often enduring multiple burdens (Chant and Pedwell, 2008; Momsen, 2004). However, this report will identify that it is also important to include men within research on informality, because their inclusion may be beneficial in reducing gender inequalities (Chant and Gutmann, 2000). This is important, because previous research has identified that mounting economic pressures within Dar es Salaam are having an impact on conventional gender relations (Blundo and LeMeur, 2009). This report will have value in addressing and exploring this further, by

offering informed discussions into the contemporary changes that are taking place within the city, and by examining the subsequent effects that these changes are having on the positions of both men and women.

Dar es Salaam currently has a population of 4.36 million (NBS, 2013), however this is expected to increase to 10.7 million by 2030 (UN, 2013) due to high levels of rapid urbanisation (Gough and Langevang, 2016). This is important because informality is most prevalent within urban areas, therefore as the urban population grows, so too will a reliance on informal work. Individuals can no longer rely on the government to provide formal jobs or support them in their daily endeavours, thus many must now rely on themselves to 'make a living' (Castells and Portes, 1989; Lindell, 2010). It is therefore vital to understand the lived experiences of informal workers in Tanzania and recognize ways in which their positions could be improved.

Furthermore, this research has significant contemporary relevance because it is directly related to two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); 'decent work' and 'gender equality' (ILO, 2016), which are part of a wider 17-point global agenda aimed at achieving urban sustainability across the globe by 2030 (UN, 2015). As Dar es Salaams' population rapidly increases, it will be important to analyse how the informal sector develops within this timeframe, along with understanding how it can be supported and managed.

2. Methodology

2.1 Interviews and sampling method

A purposive sampling method was used to recruit 18 participants for semi-structured interviews; 11 participants were professionals who worked with/supported informal workers and 7 participants were informal workers who were actively working within the informal sector. Semi-structured interviews were used because I wanted discussions to develop through the experience and opinions of the participants (Bryman, 2016). Research assistants were used when interviewing informal workers for translation purposes.

2.2 Workshop held in Dar es Salaam

A two-hour workshop was held in the Temeke region of Dar es Salaam and involved the participation of 8 informal sector workers (4 female, 4 male), aged between 18-25 who were members of a local community-based organisation (Table 1). The workshop involved a participatory time-use diagram and focus group session. A time-use diagram was used because it allowed participants to explore their daily routines and allowed myself as a researcher to identify the commonalities and differences in daily activity between them (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015). Initially, I went around the group several times and asked the participants to list all the things they did within a typical 24-hour period (Figure 1). After this was completed, categories were decided upon and then each participant assigned stickers to each category, depending on how much time they thought they spent on each (see Figure 2) (each sticker represented 1 hour).

Table 1: Breakdown of workshop participants' biographical characteristics

Characteristics	Number of participatory diagramming/focus group participants	
	Male	Female
Gender		
	4	4
Age		
18-20 yrs		2
20-23 yrs	3	2
23-25yrs	1	
Current work in informality:		
Farming	2	
Business (selling items)	2	1
Hair Dressing		2
Teaching		1
Educational background		
Form 1-4 (Secondary ordinary level school (14-17yrs))	3	4
Form 5-6 (Secondary advanced level school (18-19yrs))	1	
	Total FG participants:	8

2.3 Data analysis and dissemination

The data was thematically analysed using inductive coding which compressed the extensive and rich data set I was confronted with (Mason, 1996). Originally, I identified core themes within the interviews and used two different colours to distinguish this throughout the interview transcripts. After several readings of the transcripts, I then started to identify recurring trends and placed these on an A3 piece of paper and then after much deliberation, I identified sub-themes within each core theme (Bryman, 2016). This process produced the results which are discussed throughout this report.

This research report seeks to disseminate the findings among professionals who participated in the research and other policymakers and practitioners in Tanzania and internationally. Moreover, these preliminary findings will help to shape my doctoral research and will allow me to identify and develop avenues of research for further study.

3. Main research findings

3.1 Current understanding of the informal sector in Dar es Salaam

Almost all participants identified that informal work is prevalent within Dar es Salaam because there is a lack of formal job availability due to widespread government cutbacks. For many urbanites, the informal sector is the only way in which they can sustain their livelihoods. When talking to a vocational skills trainer with regards to why people undertake informal work, he explained to me that; *'They (informal workers) don't have much option, because if they don't do that (informal work), what else? So, to them it's the only thing they have at hand to survive'*

Throughout this study and as shown in the quotation above, it was mostly identified that informal work is used to pay for 'essentials', which can include things such as food, water, shelter, transportation and medical bills (if required). It is acknowledged that some individuals make a lot of money from working in the informal sector, however in this research most individuals undertook informal work primarily as a means of survival. It is also recognized that informal workers are facing increasingly challenging conditions due to their growing numbers, which in turn is leading to more competitive and oversaturated informal labour markets (Banks, 2016).

Besides the income-generating aspect of informal work, it was also highlighted that informality is an essential provider of products and services to local communities. One NGO worker stated, 'I depend on them (informal workers) you know, I take their services'. Additionally, it was recognised that rather than simply starting a 'random' business, informal workers will often find gaps in the market: *'Let's say if I start a small restaurant here. It is because I've seen people around here need food and the government itself cannot see that, so I've solved a problem for the people'* (Community based organisation worker).

Interestingly however, some individuals had motivations beyond their own needs and were driven by wider issues of concern. When speaking to an informal farmer, they explained to me that hunger was the main reason why they decided to start a business in agriculture: *'In this continent of Africa, there is a problem of hunger and that is what made me want to do agricultural work'*. Other examples of such motivations included young people teaching local children basic literacy and numeracy skills. This teaching was done informally for a small fee of 200tsh (64p) and was undertaken because it was recognized that many poor families in the local community could not afford the price of school fees, thus in an address of this, young people offered an affordable alternative.

The examples in this section highlight the diverse nature of informal workers and show that they should not be viewed as a homogenous group. Accordingly, future policies and initiatives should take this into consideration before being implemented so that they can cater to the specific needs of different types of informal workers.

3.2 The uncertainties of informality

As stated, most informal workers will work for survival reasons and as such they are often shrouded by uncertainty/unpredictability. A major negative of informality is that there are no guarantees and safeguards, therefore an informal worker can never be sure of how much money they will earn; sometimes they may earn nothing at all (Simone, 2001). One informal worker stated: *'You may not be able to get to have money all the time you know, because it's not like you're expecting a salary every month'* (Female soap maker/caterer in the informal sector). In this study it was found that on average, the weekly wage of an informal worker was around 25,000tsh (£7.90) (n=6) and for many of these individuals, they spent almost all their earnings on necessities. This means that for these individuals, they had very little capacity to save money and build up their capital, therefore they would not be able to afford any unexpected bills. For example, if a worker or anyone in their family suddenly became ill, this would force them to 'kill' their business and use that capital to pay for medical expenses. As one community-based Worker summarised, *'if you are sick your business is sick'*. This will put the individual and their family in a very precarious position, which is further exacerbated by a lack of government support systems.

3.3 What are the differences between men and women in informality?

It was found throughout this research that when participants were asked what work, tasks and responsibilities men and women undertook within informality in Dar es Salaam, many would refer to 'how it used to be' or 'how it usually is' in Tanzania: *'In Tanzania, according to our culture, we expect women to be looking after the family or home affairs, while men are going out to look for money'* (Female soap maker/caterer in the informal sector). Many respondents identified that traditionally, men are the breadwinners in Tanzania whilst women are mostly home-based and are responsible for undertaking tasks such as cleaning, cooking and caring for the family.

However, there was a real sense throughout this research that Dar es Salaam was somewhat 'different' to the rest of Tanzania and that there were noticeable changes in relation to gender occurring within the city: *'Once you come to Dar, things have changed already...nowadays the kinds of work that can be performed by men, women can also perform'* (Government Officer)

Within this study, all 7 informal worker participants acknowledged that men and women are increasingly undertaking similar types of work, and it was documented that there aren't "as many" differences between men and women as there once was. For example, it was often mentioned that men now cook, sell vegetables and undertake paid cleaning activities, whilst women can now be found working on construction sites, driving lorries and working as mechanics: *Ladies are 'breaking walls' which is a good sign and they are seen more and more to come even into the men's sections* (Priest).

However, it was consistently mentioned in this study that women do not do heavy lifting in market spaces nor do they drive *daladala* minibuses or ride *bodaboda's*. This is important to note because it shows that roles are changing to an extent, however not in all areas of work.

Nevertheless, evidence does show that culturally expected gender norms are to some extent, being transgressed (Evans, 2015). Interestingly, gendered changes were not only taking place within the realms of paid work, but they were also occurring in relation to unpaid work too. In this research, 3 male informal workers identified that they undertook caring roles within their household, such as looking after their parents and/or siblings. One male informal worker during an interview explained: *'The responsibility which I have right now is to take a good care of my mother'* (Male farmer in the informal sector).

Additionally, during a participatory diagramming session conducted in the Temeke region of Dar es Salaam, it was found that on average, men undertook 3 hours of care (Malezi) and 4.75 hours of domestic responsibilities (Shaghuli za nyumbani), whilst women undertook 2.25 hours of care and 3 hours of domestic responsibilities each day, respectively (see Figure 3). It is acknowledged that these results are not conclusive, nor should they be generalised, and there should be an awareness that the recorded time spent on each task may have been under/over-stated by the women and men in this study (Evans, 2012). Nevertheless, the most important point taken from this session was that men in this research actively acknowledged their roles in caring and domestic responsibilities. It is therefore surprising that this has seldom been identified within other studies on informality. Arguably this could be because of a general neglect of men's lives within an analysis of the informal sector (White, 1997).

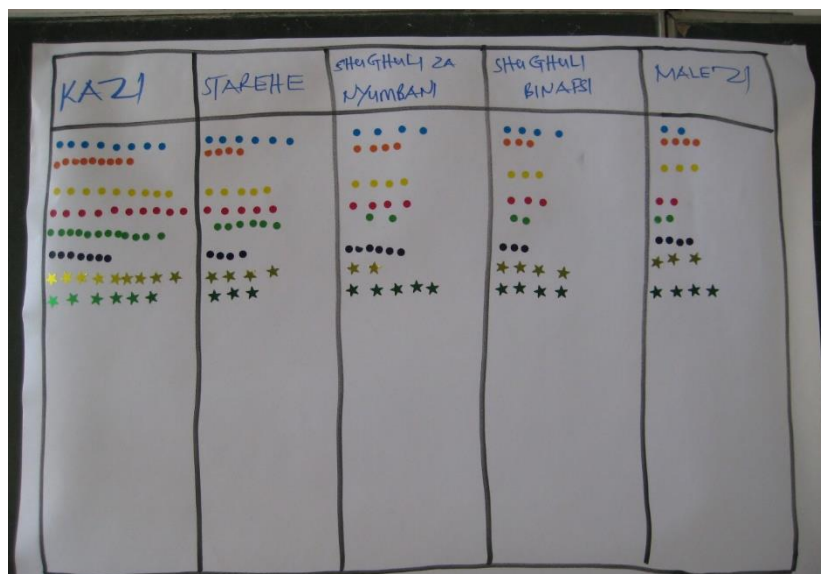


Fig. 3: Participatory daily diagram undertaken with informal workers to understand their daily routines (Rows, 1, 2, 6, 8 = Male rows, 3, 4, 5, 7 = Female)

3.4 The challenges that men and women face in the city

Men are traditionally seen as the breadwinner within the Tanzanian household, however due to a decline in waged employment many have become unemployed and are increasingly unable to provide a regular and sufficient income for their families. Resultantly, many families have had to adapt in response to this and therefore countless women are now undertaking more and more informal income-generating activities: *'Things are changing, life is becoming hard, so that's why it forces everyone now, men and women to go to work so that they can get money'* (Community Based Organisation Worker). Respondents within this research identified that when faced with economic difficulties and hardship, men and women will undertake any form of work they can regardless of whether it is perceived as 'men's' or 'women's' work: *'They are doing whatever they can to employ themselves and in that situation, you cannot say that that is men's work, and that is women's work. Anything that comes around you will have to do it'* (Male farmer in the informal sector)

Nevertheless, even though there are evident changes in traditional job roles and 'less visible' divisions between women and men, women continue to endure inequitable workloads which has worsened due to their increased participation within the informal sector (Chant and Pedwell, 2008). Several organisations within this research identified that women are increasing overburdened and rarely receive assistance from their male counterparts. On occasion however, this has been addressed and one community-based worker explained:

We have this one woman who is selling vegetables and she wanted to have a small vegetable farm and sell and pick the vegetables every morning and go on the street to sell. Her husband was just at home, but after a few empowerment processes here at the office, the husband is now waking up in the morning, going to the farm, watering the vegetables and picking the vegetables from the farm and giving it to his wife to take and sell on the street.

This point is very important, because if issues of inequality are to be tackled then I would argue that it is crucial to educate and make men aware that their assistance can be very positive for the household and could lead to increased productivity and efficiency. Fundamentally, greater collaboration between men and women could also reduce the mounting pressures which women are subjected to (White, 1997).

3.5 Conclusion

In summary, it is important to identify that informal workers are an incredibly heterogeneous group of individuals. Arguably, an individual's motivation for undertaking informal work will mostly revolve around survival, however it is also important to recognise that alternative motivations relating to wider issues of hunger, poverty and education, may also influence the type of informal work an individual undertakes.

It has also been identified that informal work is characteristically unpredictable, volatile and brings uncertainty to many individuals' lives. This is important to highlight because there is much that needs to be done to ensure that informal workers are in a state of security and can rely on national and local government to provide them with necessary and effective support should they need it. Moreover, the uncertain nature of informality is one of the main reasons as to why gendered roles, tasks and responsibilities within Dar es Salaam are changing. This research identified that as economic pressures increase, traditional gendered boundaries are beginning to blur, and individuals now undertake types of work out of necessity rather than through choice/tradition. The work that men and women are undertaking, both remunerated and non-remunerated, is starting to deviate from traditional expectations, yet a contemporary analysis of men's positions continues to be excluded within mainstream literature on informality. In no way do I wish to detract from the wider structural inequalities and evident overburdening women are subjected to daily, especially in the context of increased participation within the informal sector, however I do believe that a more holistic approach to gender and informality would allow for a better understanding into the overall needs of informal workers.

4. Recommendations

In this final section, I identify recommendations based on the findings of this research. I will highlight the types of support that informal workers require the most, and thereafter I will focus my discussions on highlighting ways in which both national and localized support for informal workers could be more effective and wide-reaching.

4.1 General needs of informal workers

It was frequently identified by many respondents in this study, that informal workers were in vital need of support in relation to accessing loans and acquiring relevant skills and business trainings: *'I would like to get more training, especially on how to set up business because I would like to grow in my business'* (Female soap maker/caterer in the informal sector). Another informal worker stated: *'I would like to get training on how to keep chickens and after training I would like to borrow a small amount of money to make things modern'* (Male Poultry Farmer). Both these workers identified the importance of training and capital in being able to develop themselves and their business endeavours.

Trainings given to informal workers should teach them how to:

- brand and package their products to make them more appealing to costumers
- conform to high standards of hygiene and general product satisfaction that customers' demand

Capital is important to informal workers because as mentioned earlier, they are often in states of precarity and uncertainty. Therefore, informal workers need:

- to know how and where to access loans and/or join microfinance schemes
- guidance on how to effectively use their money. For example, they need to know how to source products cheaply and they need to learn what products are most lucrative
- to be aware of the benefits of savings up a small amount of money when possible, so that they have a reserve to fall back on, should they need it

4.2 Changes that need to happen on a national level

Both informal workers and professionals stated that they often heard politicians make promises about improving the conditions of informal workers, however nothing ever seemed to materialise. There was a real sense that the government should consider utilising a bottom-up approach to understand the current circumstances of informal workers. When talking to a young farmer about how the government could better improve his position as an informal worker, he responded by

saying: *'What the government needs to do, is come here and see the place where we are working and see our working facilities and they will see how they can help us'* (Male Agricultural Worker)

It can be argued that it is necessary that the government develops well-informed and mutually effective networks with a range of stakeholders, to be able to properly address and understand the issues and challenges facing informal workers. A participatory approach would mean (in practice), that policy initiatives could be co-generated between the government and informal worker stakeholders, which would result in more beneficial outcomes for informal workers. The 'Machinga Complex', is an important example of when the government has acted without effective consultation with key stakeholders. The rationale beyond the complex was to house and formalise informal workers who primarily worked on the streets selling a range of goods. However, the complex is in a marginalised location away from the city centre and thus very few customers visit this site. Consequently, many street sellers went back to the streets where they could make significantly more money.

When talking to a gender rights activist who works predominately with women in market places, she explained that: *The government should really have a long-term plan for these people, it's not about these ad-hoc ones'* (Gender right activist). Arguably, the government does seem to have a plan; however, this is focused mostly on tax collection so that it can increase its revenues. Resultantly, informal businesses are being encouraged to formalise. However, as Chen (2009) exclaims, formalising informal workers is not a one-step homogenous process; it takes a lot of time and commitment to achieve and can be complex. In this research, it was also identified that the process of formalisation was too confusing and many people did not know how to do it/who to go to for assistance. The government does not seem to have a plan in place to assist these workers in formalising, even though it is part of their 'strategy' to increase revenue intake. At present, it is mostly NGO's and other organisations that are filling in the gap and offering informal workers support on how to formalise.

Furthermore, NGO's and other organisations also support informal workers in other areas such as skills and business training. However, they are limited (although not always) by a lack of funds and resources and are thus limited to helping informal workers on a small scale. If the government provided financial backing and supported the expertise of organisations across the city, then more effective and larger scale support could be implemented.

4.3 What more could be done to support informal workers on a localised level?

Through my experiences of talking to a range of organisations, I identified that they all provided very valuable and worthwhile support, however funding was an evident constraint in many cases. When I asked organisations how this could be addressed, many believed that the best way to support the informal sector would be by forming partnerships between the government and various organisations, because they could achieve far more together than on their own. It is acknowledged that acquiring the support of the government may be very difficult at present, therefore organisations should primarily focus on forming partnerships between themselves.

In relation to what organisations can do to assist informal workers, they should:

- take a more participatory approach with informal workers and consult with them on what skills, trainings and opportunities they would like to have available to them.
- involve informal workers in some decision making/consultations within the organisation, so that it continues to grow positively with the support and input of its members.
- continually update and adapt the trainings and skills offered to informal worker members, so that they are relevant and applicable to the trends of contemporary labour markets.

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