

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Street vending is the most visible aspect of the informal sector of business, where thousands of people earn their living by selling goods on streets, sidewalks and other open public places (Shrestha 2013). The number of street vendors, in the Kathmandu Valley, is increasing day by day. Migrants from rural areas who do not possess the skill, knowledge and education to gain a better-paying job in the formal and informal sectors or lack capitals to own their own enterprises are found to opt for street vending. In most of the cases, of street vendors, income generation is the secondary role whereas earning a living is the primary role (Shrestha 2019). So access to income, savings, access and control over resources and freedom to use saved income are less significant for women than men (Shrestha 2013). The main spending of the vendors is on the basic utilities of the family. Income earned through street vending has increased the financial independence and decision making power of women within the household. However, the majority of the women engaged in this sector are found to be overburdened with multiple responsibilities.

The nexus between migration and development has remained an issue under vigorous academic debate. Therefore, the process of people migrating to other areas in search of a better life is not a novel one. Migration, as an influx of voluntary movement of people for the better quality of life from underdeveloped rural hinterlands to developed urban spaces, is overwhelmingly observed in developing countries (Adepoju 2000).

In this regard, rural to urban migration results from the search of perceived or real opportunities and is consequential to geographical inequality of wealth. Urban bias in terms of wealth concentration, purchasing capacities, economic activities and varieties of sectoral growth, of services with correspondential neglect and degradation of rural areas (Harris & Todaro 1970) can be reasoned for the upsurge in this migratory trend. Migration has been identified as a survival scheme employed by the poor. Remittance from cities is important for survivals in villages and is dubbed as critical resource for the sustenance strategies of receiving households (World Bank 2005).

Urban development is closely related to economic development for its concentrated population and resources. The urban population itself is for the most part a result of migration. Perceived as generators of skills and wealth, the urban zones gravitates all—rich and poor, and, educated and illiterates. The poor and illiterates coming from rural hamlets into town and cities lack capital and the urbane tricks of trade. They lack assets and basic structures which would supply them with the basic needs.

The concept of “poverty” in social sciences has gained popularity since 1960s. During 1980s poverty was understood as a multi-dimensional issue and income was considered as one of several socioeconomic and environmental parameters of the human development (Adhikari 2007). Poverty keeps people at risks and therefore they don’t undertake entrepreneurial statuses. Amartya Sen in 1980s went on to define poverty not only from the standpoint of economic, but also as a lack of and exclusion from social and political opportunities. Hence, to sum, poverty is characterized by socioeconomic deprivation, politico-cultural alienation, inaccessibility to state resources and technology and a particular type of spatial distribution.

The notion of “urban poverty” came into literatures as late as in 1990s and is considered as more complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon (Bhowmik 2006). Urban poor are often defined as number of households whose income falls below a specified and who live at the margins of cities (Macrae&Zwi 1994). They are engaged in informal sectors. Despite an increasing number of urban poor, there is still little attention to this issue, and, often are relegated as peripheral. The sprawling slums are spontaneously growing larger and larger in each city and its inhabitants are being engaged in their own livelihood frameworks (Tacoli 2002).

In Nepal, urban poverty is increasing at high pace particularly in cities like of the Kathmandu Valley (Adhikari 2007). During ten year long war, many poor households chose Kathmandu as the best spatial option to secure their lives and livelihoods (Shrestha 2013). This study, hence, will focus specific chunk of urban poor who survive on street stalls against all odds. This study will model a livelihood pattern of street merchants who are anxiously located in between the passersby, also their buyers, and law enforcement officials within an overarching atmospheric smoke and dust that threaten their health and lives, their mobility, knowledge and auxiliary information systems that support and sustain their livelihoods.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With increasing urban migration and increasing urban poverty, vending has emerged as one of the critical means of earning a livelihood for the urban poor in the Kathmandu valley. Today, vending is an important source of employment for a large number of populations as it requires low skills and small financial inputs. To integrate street vendors meaningfully into urban planning, it is essential to see urban spaces as multifunctional and multi-layered. Spaces are seen in different ways by different people who use the space. This paper examines how the vendors of Kathmandu negotiate and emerge with creative solutions to the usage including their strategy to sustain and adopt in the competitive environment as well as the formal and informal management of spaces in presence of municipal interventions, which is a major challenge that has to be taken up in order to accommodate vendors in urban development.

From the standpoint of city officials, an increasing number of urban poor and their management is a problem. Furthermore, such a community is ever sprawling. They “poach” riverbanks and open spaces and contest over spaces which bring irritation to bureaucratic and commercial administrators (Cross 1998). Despite of claims of government apparatuses and NGOs for working in sections of urban poor, there are no appropriate instruments, policies and legislations to “control” urban poverty. The government doesn’t have a clear policy to manage squatters and slum dwellers. On the other hand, these people are excluded from the list of urban assets. They either supply cheap labor in informal and sweatshop job markets or run activities like street vending. There were some provisional programs for urban poor in the Tenth Plan (2002-2007). City Development Strategies (CDS) for Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) felt a need of an apt policy intervention to “tame” poor communities and unplanned squatter settlements in the city. The Strategies are yet to be implemented. Rather, KMC announced a by-law on May 18, 2018 that can permanently seize the articles of the street vendors (Ghimire 2018). Prior this by-law, KMC used to penalize Rs 100 to Rs 1500 depending upon the valuation of the articles seized. There are now concerns about the new by-law which restricts street vending in many locations of KMC can collude with the fundamental rights related to employment and property, and also with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which was ratified by Nepal in 1991 (Ghimire 2018). Seemingly,

KMC body is interested toward making the pavements free of the cluttered vendors while the body may want to “drive [them] back to the villages” (Ghimire 2018).

Street vendors are self-employed individuals. Street vending is a means of survival for individuals who lack sufficient capital, skill and knowledge. People are making their existence by selling fast foods, tea, clothes, bags, shoes, cereals, fruits, books, technical items, seeds, herbal and aromatic plants etc. on the road. However, the vendors work to maintain their regular livelihood. Street vending is also a good temporary job while permanent employment is being sought (Shrestha, 2013). The number of street vendors and the nature (types) of goods they sell in streets of New Road, Jamal, Ratna Park, Old Bus Park, Bhotahity, Sundhara, Bagbazar, Basantapur, New Bus Park and Khichapokhari among others.

In this context, this research brings a fresh understanding of street vendors, a part of urban poor, their survival and plight, and of their daily struggles to structural procedures of larger socioeconomic contexts.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the background of the vendors on the streets of Kathmandu Valley and what are their daily activities?
2. What kind of actions are vendors taking in order to cope with or resist government interventions?

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are—

- To explore the economic capitals that these vendors can have access to and how they attempt to do so, the types of goods they sell, and their daily activities and routes.
- To find out the resistance measures undertaken by street vendors (analyze the range of coping mechanisms in place for vendors both itinerant and fixed) and investigate the specific forms of urban resistance that vendors enact.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to look at two issues of street vendors in the Kathmandu city, the trajectory of their coming in the streets, and, their daily trading practices and the resistance measures undertaken by street vendors to cope with government interventions. This thesis incorporates a diverse range of vendors' social and economic capitals constructing their realities that face diversities of effects while in selling the goods. The literature, focusing on the livelihood of street vendors relating to its social and economic impacts are generally limited to the field-based studies of vendors from the Kathmandu Valley, which came from different districts of Nepal. Compared to existing literature, this thesis brings a novel case under the domain of sociology. I assumed this thesis has contributed to the field of street vending and urban poverty, and, livelihood processes of the poor in urban spaces with their corresponding position vis-à-vis bystanders and city officials.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The thesis is divided in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the issue of street vendors in the Kathmandu Valley and contextualizes two research questions- who are the vendors on the streets of Kathmandu Valley and their daily trading practices? And, what kind of actions are vendors taking in order to cope with or resist government interventions? The second chapter comprises of review of extant literatures pertinent to street vendors, and, my research problem. The second chapter is divided into sub-sections of definition of street vending; urbanization and urban poverty; migration and livelihood; theoretical approaches to migration in social sciences; nature of street vending; infuriation and significance of street vendor; study of street vending in Nepal and, vending impact to livelihood of the vendors. This chapter puts my research problem in the space of existing literature. The third chapter deals with the research methodology. In this section, I have expounded on my research procedure—how I collected data? I have explained my research design, study population, study area, unstructured interview and observation as methods of data collection, limitations of my study and, ethical issues. The two chapters-four and five-focuses on analyses- answer the two of my research questions. The fourth, entitled as “Trading Practices of Street Vendors in Kathmandu Valley” focuses on demographics-age, gender, education level and marital status- of my responding street vendors;

social capital or network whereby they are drawn to street hawking; how did they learn to do street business; the articles they sell, how do

They procure and what are profit margins, designs of their stalls, route, clientele and working hours; income and expenses; vending as a desired livelihood, vending as a means of supporting oneself and one's dependents; and, the negative costs of vending. The fifth chapter, "Tools of Resistance", deals with the daily struggle of street vendors with the policing of the KMC officials. In this section, I have elaborated on different techniques through which they keep on doing what they are doing. There are different techniques employed by street vendors in Kathmandu Valley like bottom-up surveillance, disguise, running away and bribing among others. The chapter six concludes and, theoretical reflection this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of street vending

Street vending is an old practice in cities all over the world (Cross 2000). In the developing world, there has been a trend toward informalisation of the urban economies with increased share of income earned from unregulated employment. In many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, the formal sector has not been able to provide jobs for the growing urban population. This has led to proliferation of the urban informal sector. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), approximately 85 percent of new employment opportunities around the world are created in the informal economy and 60 percent of all urban jobs are in the informal economy (ILO 2002a;2002b).The informal sector has been and still is an important source of income and livelihood for many people around the world.

The informal sector is characterized by small scale, labor intensive, low fixed cost, use of simple technology, reliance on family labor, use of personal or informal sources of credit, nonpayment of taxes, relatively easy to establish and exit etc. (Hart 1973). In addition, it relates to economic activities involving the production and distribution of goods and services that are not registered and regulated by the state or local government. The informal sector excludes those activities legally proscribed and sanctioned which are indeed by their nature criminal, underground or hidden (Drummond1993).

Street vending, therefore, fits into these characteristics, then it is, of course, a segment within the informal sector. Over the years, street vending has become a rampant source of employment and income to many urban dwellers. Hence, it is the largest sub-group of informal workforce after the home-based workers. All together, these two groups represent 10-35 percent of non-agricultural workforce in developing countries compared to 5 percent of the total force in developed countries (ILO 2002a). In the same study, ILO showed that street vending occupies 8 percent, 14.6percent and 6percent of the non-agricultural labor force in Kenya, South Africa, and Tunisia respectively. Note that these percentages are increasing as time passes by.

2.2 Urbanization and Urban Poverty

Today, urbanization has been considered as one of the primary keys for societal development and progress. As a result, many people congregate to cities and urban areas in search of better opportunities and quick money. Urbanization is a process of transformation of economy from traditional structure to modern and isolated economic activities to concentrated nodes of production; and an urban area is considered as a political and administrative unit. It plays an important role to make a change between various ethnic minorities and social and economic groups and discrimination is less entrenched in urban areas. In this context, urbanization establishes a positive social attitude of the urban people. Carr (2003) defined urbanization as 'becoming more urban' and in this process four interlinked characteristics can be identified-

Population number: increasing proportion of the population; it is at first, due to the large scale migration from rural areas.

Shift in economy: urban based activities e.g. basic/non-basic function and related activities in the manufacturing and service sectors. Agricultural activities are very less and have become less important in urban area.

The nature of society: the urbanized society is shifting towards monetary economy. Media and communication play an important role to link to the outer world.

Social activities and lifestyles are also influenced by the technological and innovational change. Such changes also influence poor communities.

The concept of 'poverty' gained currency since 1960s. During 1960s, poverty was measured in terms of income level. In the mid-1970s, the concept of economic poverty was re-defined in terms of 'basic needs', poverty did not fall only in the scope of economic earning, but it also directly linked with health, education and access to other services. During 1980s, poverty was understood as a multidimensional issue in which focus was laid on non-economic aspects. Since then livelihood risk and security, and several socio cultural and environmental factors are considered as indicators of the human poverty. Amartya Sen, during 1980s, defined poverty not only in terms of household economy, but also as a lack of/exclusion from social and political opportunities. Sustainable, healthy, educated, creative life, freedom, self-esteem and respectable opportunities are also a part of poverty (Adhikari 2007). The concepts of livelihood security and

vulnerability are popular since 1990s, and human poverty is being considered within the framework of sustainable livelihood. Poverty, at present, is being dealt with not only in terms of economic indicators, but also in terms of social, political, environmental variables, opportunities, inclusion/exclusion, sustainability, social psychological aspect, ethnicity and minority status. Adhikari (2007) has discussed the various parameters of measuring poverty that gives a clear concept of poverty.

Urban poverty is an increasing in many developing countries including Nepal. It is more complex and multi-dimensional. Urban poor are primarily engaged in the informal sector of the urban economy and their participation in formal sector including agriculture and laborious activities is very low. Urban poor communities prioritize the opportunity, security and shelter in urban location (Carr 2003). But the nature of poverty in general, is characterized by socio-economic deprivation, politico-cultural alienation, and inaccessibility to state resources and technology and a particular type of spatial distribution. Poor communities are mostly involved in the informal activities as they are excluded from the formal sector of economy through lack of education and employment training, and their employment in the informal sector is generally characterized by a low level of income and high level of vulnerability in terms of risk and harassment (Hossain 2005, 21).

Harpham, Lusty and Vangham (1988) have found that disaggregating among low income households showed that the poorest of the poor are the women headed households. These households have the least access to income earning activities and yet have the most domestic childcare responsibilities. The fact that they have to manage the house, raise children and are discriminated in the job market, greatly limit their possibilities of finding secure, and reasonably paid employment. The growing number of de-facto women-headed households in third world cities is now increasingly recognized (Harpham, Lusty and Vanghan 1988,12).

In Nepal, it is reported that the incidence of poverty in women-headed households is lower than national average, largely because these households receive remittance (CBS 2006, 30). 65 percent of female headed households receive remittance in contrast to only 24 percent of male headed households (Hunzai and Gerlitz 2010). Remittance in Nepali society helps to boost the household's economy and women are decision maker in family livelihood and service delivery and placed at a respectable position in the society. Also, the development interventions have

targeted women as prime candidates for microenterprises. Women run 68 percent of microenterprises were run by women and 43 percent of them had financial access in 2010 (Hunzai and Gerlitz 2010). Contrary to this, the report on children and women in Nepal 2006 reported, reported that women are denied opportunities for land tenancy and access to new settlement allotments and the female household heads are the poorest of the poor among the landless and marginal land households (UNICEF 2006).

Kathmandu, the capital city, provides most facilities needed in contemporary lifestyle and is home to all kinds of businesses. Thus, there is a tendency for people from all other districts in Nepal to migrate to Kathmandu in search of better paying jobs. Most men and women migrants from the rural areas are less qualified for formal jobs, and so, are engaged in informal jobs that require low investment and offer low returns. As they do not have alternative employment opportunities, they seek easier sources of income. The cost of living in the city is higher, and these migrants find themselves struggling to make their ends meet. In addition, they are often saddled with the responsibility of having to look after parents and children back in their villages. Married couples that arrive together in the city find that both must work in order to earn an income that is sufficient to manage the household. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City's office record of 2007 shows that among 56 per cent of the total number of street vendors are males selling different items while 44 per cent are female vendors selling different items. This shows that the percentage of male and female street vendors is almost equal.

The liberalization and privatization policy that Nepal adopted after 1990 has seen more and more people engaged in the informal sectors such as street vending, construction work and domestic work as helpers because the formal sectors like education, health, civil service and social service demand a high level of efficiency, skill and knowledge (Shrestha 2013). Furthermore, the increasing population of Nepal and the shrinking opportunities of employment in the formal sector have also pushed people to gain employment in the informal sectors. Moreover, more and more women are entering paid work, but their entry is mainly in the informal sector and home-based work.

2.3 Migration and livelihood

Making generalizations about the relationship between migration, poverty and vulnerability is difficult since many of the connections are context-specific (McDowell and de Haan, 1997; Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler, 2003). Relationships between migration and variables such as poverty, levels of assets (land, livestock etc.), degree of access to resources such as labor or social services and government support can be either positive or negative, and depend upon complex and historic factors in people's lives and social relationships. General analyses of migration are broadly negative: impoverished agricultural people are being pushed away from their permanent homes by structures or circumstances – low labour productivity, asset destruction, market failures, and disasters – beyond their control. The rural poor are pictured flooding into city slums, causing economic and social instability for themselves and the rest of the urban population. Perhaps because of these perceptions of negative outcomes, policy-makers, governments and donors have often seen the migration of the rural poor as being forced upon its hapless victims. This perspective assumes that rural populations are made up of sedentary agriculturalists, and that migration signifies a breakdown in the viability of rural economies. This has been the starting point for development models that have informed much policy and practice (De Haan 2003). Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, what Farrington (1998) refers to as the 'yeoman farmer' fallacy persists, and is tied to what Ellis (2000) refers to as the 'small-farm first' paradigm. It is assumed that providing support to rural communities and small-farm agriculture will alleviate rural poverty, and thus stop the flow of out-migration.

This view of migration in development thinking is reflected in many Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). A study by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research (quoted in Black 2004) examined 48 PRSPs, and found that 21 made no mention at all of migration; of the 27 that did, they did so mostly 'in negative or pejorative terms'. Seventeen presented internal migration as a problem for development, and eight cited a need to control and contain it. International migration also tends to be framed in negative terms, with Western governments in particular keen to limit it and to implement increasingly restrictive refugee policies (Harmer and Macrae 2004). In fact, rather than being an interruption to a longstanding way of life or a forced response to an unusual event, many forms of migration are typical features of poor people's livelihoods (DeHaan and Rogaly 2004; Malkki 1995). In many forms, people use mobility as a way of maintaining their

livelihoods. The development literature has increasingly stressed the diversity of poor people's livelihoods (Ellis 2000), and has recognized that the diverse portfolio of activities that make up livelihoods often includes migration and close links with urban areas (Tacoli 2002). Deshingkar (2004) describes these as 'multi-locational livelihoods'. Diversification is a key means for households to reduce and manage risk, often when faced with shocks such as natural disasters or conflict. It is therefore important to recognize the complexity and variety of different types of migration. Migration may be seasonal, permanent or circular; it may take place between urban and rural areas, and may occur within countries or across international borders. Migration patterns may also vary with gender or age: in some contexts, young men may be the primary migrants, while in others women may be more likely to migrate to find employment as domestic workers; in some cases, elderly people are more likely not to migrate.

2.4 Theoretical approaches to migration in social sciences

The earliest theories of migration in social science were mainly aimed at generalizing about the causes and effects of migration, portraying migrants either as objects influenced by magnetic forces or as rational economic agents (Aase 2006). Even though these theories focused on the universal "laws" of migration have been abandoned during the latest decades (Aase 2006), there have still been attempts to generalize the effects of migration on sending areas, including foci on "brain-drain" and remittances, as well as the effects on receiving areas, concerning the need for more laborers versus the problem of putting larger pressure on scarce resources (Potter et al. 2008). There has also been a focus on the causes of migration for instance which factors that "push" and "pull" people into migration (Aase 2006). Furthermore, migration processes have been linked to development through debates on whether migration facilitates or undermines development in sending areas (de Haas 2010).

These foci seem to assume static causes and effects of migration, and do thereby not adequately acknowledge the dynamics of reality (Ellis 2000, de Haas 2010). In relation to the debated nexus between migration and development, de Haas (2010) stresses that interactions between migration and development are both reciprocal and heterogeneous, and in order to understand the various ways in which these processes affect each other the interactions need to be contextualized geographically, politically and socially (de Haas, 2010).

Furthermore, the social positioning of migrants within households and communities has been increasingly recognized, which also facilitates a new perspective on the causes and effects of migration (de Haas 2010). The decision to involve in voluntary migration is not always an individual decision made by the migrants themselves because migration is often made part of households' livelihood strategies, which has been particularly noticed in the context of developing countries (Ellis 2000, de Haas 2010). Households shift and adapt their livelihoods to changing circumstances, and the reasons for, as well as effects of, involvement in migration are therefore also complex and shifting (Ellis 2000, de Haas 2010).

By stepping away from nomothetic theories towards idiographic approaches based on empirical research we can receive a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of migration processes and even shed light on some aspects which can be transferable to similar contexts. In this thesis, I will utilize Bebbington's (1999) framework, aimed at analyzing rural livelihoods, in order to explore how the incorporation of migration in rural livelihood strategies may affect the households' abilities to build viable livelihood.

2.5 Nature of Street Vending

It is generally defined informal sectors as poor individuals who operate businesses that are very small in scale and not registered with any national government agency, and to workers in such enterprises who sell their services in exchange for subsistence wages or other forms of compensation. Hence, sidewalk vendors are also included under the informal sectors of the economy. Bhowmik (2009) defined street vendor as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure from which to sell. In addition, Pizali (2010) said that street vendors may be stationary in the sense that they occupy space on the pavements or other public and private spaces or, they may be mobile in the sense they move from place to place by carrying their wares on push carts or in baskets on their heads.

Pizali (2010) identified the activities in the informal sector into two categories- the self-employed and casual labour. A major self-employed work is known as street vendors. Moreover, Vanzi (2001) said that the rise in the number of street vendors is largely due to the lack of employment in other sectors but it is also directly linked to the expansion of the informal sector in Asian countries.

Sekar (2010) stipulated that street vendors form a substantial proportion of the informal sector who earns their livelihood through vending. They have flexible vending hours ensuring the economic viability and dynamism of the city. It also creates employment thereby alleviating the hardships of employment. Further, Alabanza (2004) revealed that an increase in street vending is a global urban phenomenon. Lack of gainful employment in the formal economy pushes workers to search for alternative livelihoods and sidewalk vending is one of the most viable options.

It can also be defined street vendors which include all those selling goods or services in public places. They may refer to vendors with fixed stalls such as kiosk; vendors who operate from semi-fixed stalls, like folding tables or wheeled pushcarts that are removed from the streets and stored overnight; vendors who sell from fixed locations without a stall structure; or mobile vendors who walk or bicycle through the streets as they sell. Further, Broomly (2000) identified types of public places where street vendors works. These are regulated street markets or hawking zones, natural market areas, transportation hubs, big establishments and churches, and schools and universities' vicinities. Moreover, Garcia-Bolivar (2006) said that sidewalk vending usually characterized by ease to entry, low resource base, family ownership, and labor intensive and informal processes for acquiring skills.

2.6 Infuriation and significance of street vendor

A second position represented in the literature focuses on street vending as a substantial contributor to local economies, as well as an indicator of a thriving economy. Street vending is a highly visible component of the informal sector, forms a large percentage of urban economies around the world, and thrives extensively in the global south (DiGregorio 1994; Hays-Mitchell 1994; Lincoln 2008; Milgram 2009). For example, in Hanoi — a city of approximately 6.5 million people — street vending is noted to be one of the most frequent means by which the city's inhabitants make a livelihood (Gorman 2008; Lincoln 2008). Moreover, this livelihood offers a means of sustenance to individuals across cities with a range of socioeconomic positions, from New York to Hanoi (Austin, 1994). Whereas the lifeline approach presents vendors as a vulnerable and marginalized social group, the economic approach suggests that vendors are better understood as innovative entrepreneurs (HaysMitchell, 1994). Lincoln (2008: 262) writes that: These reports portray the uneducated, rural, and feminized workforce not as the struggling

victims of globalization and market reform, but as the local representatives of grassroots economic development.

In this way, the focus on economic factors – which is linked to Desoto's (1989) approach to street vending– is used to argue that street vending is a thriving form of microbusiness, the presence of which is a sign of a developing, energetic and thriving economy (Ferguson 1994). However one critique of this position is that, in reality, very few street vendors are able to make significant amounts of profit; rather, most vendors are constantly in position of poverty (Bromley 1978).

It often also represented in government institutions and policies, presenting street vendors as an infuriation (Bhowmik 2006; Brown 2006). This approach is linked to efforts to control, restrict or eliminate the livelihood of street vending (Austin, 1994; ILO2002). Regardless of the livelihoods, street vending can provide, and the contributions of this form of trade to local economies and markets, street vendors are often unwanted in cities where they trade (Higgs, 2002; Austin, 1994). As such, this argument tends to gloss over the critical role that vending plays in the subsistence efforts of those involved, focusing instead on the concerns associated with this livelihood (Lincoln 2008). They become scapegoats for a variety of issues, including health concerns, traffic problems or for what is perceived as a negative urban image (Lincoln 2008). Often, processes of development and modernization are carried out in a way that presents street vendors as anti-development, and an inhibitor to progress; as a result they are frequently relocated and their trading is restricted (Bhowmik 2006; Brown 2006; Bromley 1998; 2000). I reflect upon this approach in my research because it is the dominant discourse played out by the municipal government. In Hanoi, this approach to vending was first made explicit when pavements were declared to be only for walking – not for selling by the city authorities in 1984 (Koh 2008). Continuing on this trajectory, in 2008 Hanoi's municipal government banned street vending on 62 selected streets and from the vicinity of 48 public spaces throughout the city (People's Committee of Hanoi 2008). Additionally, street vending comes under pressure from short term restrictions brought in during events such as the South East Asian Games (hosted by Hanoi in 2003), yearly Independence Day celebrations (2nd September), and most recently, Hanoi's 1000 year anniversary celebrations (October, 2010).

2.7 Vending Impact to the Livelihood of the Vendors

The literature reviewed here increases my understanding of who participates in street vending, the ways in which vending functions and the key political and structural factors that affect the ability of vendors to trade. For the purpose of my study, street vendors are understood as those who use public streets in order to carry out their trading livelihoods. Vendors may be fixed or itinerant, and sell a variety of products and services

A great deal of literature explored the case of sidewalk vending or street vending and other forms of informal economy. One of the issues addressed as seen in World Bank studies (2005) is the social protection of street vendors due to social risk arising out of the nature of the sector and the informality of their employment relationship. Related studies also underscored the variety of constraints (i.e. technology, credit, capital, and education and training) that the informal sector faces (Scheinberg, et al., 2010). These studies pose challenge for policy makers to design policies which can systematically and consistently address these issues. One fact which is clear is that there are very few interventions which can address all or most of them at the same time. Most of the attention, however, has been directed at the fact that often the earnings and employment situation of informal sector workers is inferior to that of the formal sector workers.

In the study of Segar (2010), it was found out that the main reasons for people engaging in street vending are as follows: to have a regular source of income, self-dependence, lack of employment opportunities, assisting to manage household expenditures, and alcohol and idle husband or a father. Almendral (2014) stipulated that the majority of the street vendors are engaging in this kind of business is to uplift their current status and to buy the basic needs and commodities in their life. However, because of the threats coming from the municipal and national government, their job and business is unstable. Malazzarte (1999) in the results of his study revealed that street vending plays an important role in the socio-economic life of the sidewalk vendors in Cebu City. Some of the contributions of street vending are the following: education of their children, payment of rentals and household expenditures, and additional income to the family.

The “lifeline” approach to vending has a socioeconomic focus and is centered on the idea that individuals making a living this way depend on their trading livelihoods to meet their most basic survival needs. Martha Lincoln (2008) introduces the “lifeline approach,

academically, seconding DFID and World Bank, as a form of “small scale populist capitalism” that refers to self-help microbusinesses that assists the livelihood of working class people, who otherwise would have been crushed by globalization and market reform. Often, this position is held by social scientists, pro-poor organizations, reflecting positions held by many street vendors themselves (Lincoln 2008). The majority of street vendors in the Global South — especially itinerant — are rural to urban migrants, often women, who do not have access to more formal livelihoods due to a lack of formal education, financial capital or social networks (Drummond 1993; DiGregorio 1994; Higgs 2003; Mitchell 2008). Considering the positions of vulnerability many street vendors occupy, Lincoln (2008: 262) argues for the importance of this livelihood, describing vending as a “lifeline for poor and working people” in that “street vending — a time consuming, physically demanding occupation — helps poor and rural families to assemble a living wage”. That is to say that street vending is an important means of survival for thousands of people across the globe, many of whom belong to low income groups, and have little access to other forms of livelihood (Gorman 2008; Hays-Mitchell 1990; Milgram 2009). As such, this literature informs my study by turning my attention to the basic livelihood needs of vendors, and by increasing my understanding of how they meet their basic needs, as well as what indeed these needs are, such as school fees.

De Guzman (2007) said that street vending reflects the current status of the country. Despite the ways by the administration to eradicate and to address the presence of the sidewalk vendors, condemning the vendors to continue their enterprises may be tantamount to ignoring the unemployment situation and consequently aggravating the state of poverty in the country.

2.8 Study of Street Vending in Nepal

There is considerable academic interest, worldwide, on street vending. Many of the studies are carried out on cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A data “Study of Street Vendors in Greater Kathmandu, Final Report, 2011” by Centre for Integrated Urban Development (CIUD) showed that there were 110 vending centers in the Greater Kathmandu, at that time, and with over 10, 000 vendors. Of course, this number may have been inflated because of the influx of people who lost their homes and income resources or became destitute by the 2015 Earthquake (Ojha 2018). Even at the time when the aforementioned report was published, the Nepal Street Vendors Trade Union (NSVTU) predicted the number of vendors to be 20, 000

in KMC and 30, 000 in the Kathmandu Valley (Adhikari 2011). Dhungel and Dhungel (2011) found out that the working age population was more active in streets, selling goods. Dhungel and Dhungel (2011) also brought competition between vendors into light, which was happening for a couple of years. The inclusion of a chunk of educated and foreign employment returnees of being involved in vending and hawking, included in aforementioned literature, can be looked askance. Economistic articles on street vendors in the Kathmandu Valley have pointed out the vending as a way of income generation (Adhikari 2017). Street vending is said to be differentiated—with off-street, semi-permanent structures that serve as stalls, and, cat-and-mouse play between petty hawkers and securities (Brown 2005). Bhattarai (2008) enlists population increase, government policies and pollution giving problems to the street hawkers. Seasonality, in monsoon or in adverse weathers, also makes the vendors suffer (Bhattarai 2008). The street vendors have unionized along the lines of political parties to check the adverse policies of the state. Nepal Street Vendors Union (NSVU), for example, is associated with General Federation of Nepalese Trade Union (GFONTU). Likewise, United Trader’s Trade [sic] Organization Nepal (UTTON) is a network of hawkers that aspire to form a national alliance of hawkers that would safeguard the interests of the same (UTTON 2007). There are a few literatures; aforementioned, pertaining to street vendors in the Kathmandu Valley which have largely focused on economic sense, the *qualitative* field-based study of the topic are very rare.

Summary

Street vending is an old practice in cities across the globe. Street vending is considered to be a part of informal economy. Contemporaneously, there are concerns of sprawling urbanization and corresponding rise of urban poverty. The above review of literatures shows that migration is linked to livelihood—a trajectory through which many migrate from hinterlands to cities like Kathmandu to make their living. The cities-bound migration of rural folks has given rise to the number of hawkers and vendors. This study were look at the socioeconomic conditions of the vendors and hawkers, and, the perks and costs of being the same. In doing so, I am firmly grounded to “lifeline” approach (Lincoln 2008) which takes vending with a socioeconomic focus, and, vending as a tool for survival of the dirt-poor who don’t have capitals to start-up an enterprise that is not a street-cart.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. It is a “blueprint” for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypotheses, and must specify at least three processes: (1) the data collection process, (2) the instrument development process, and (3) the sampling process (Lavrakas 2008). Broadly speaking, data collection methods can be broadly grouped into two categories: positivist and interpretive. Positivist methods employ a deductive approach to research, starting with a theory and testing theoretical postulates using empirical data. In contrast, interpretive methods employ an inductive approach that starts with data and tries to derive a theory about the phenomenon of interest from the observed data. Often times, these methods are incorrectly equated with quantitative and qualitative research. Fairly, I am following qualitative method of inquiry in this research.

This study was exploratory and descriptive—a part of qualitative methodology. It is exploratory in the sense that very few studies on street vendors have been done, and descriptive in the sense that it has provided descriptive information about the livelihood strategy of Kathmandu street vendors.

3.2 Study Population

The respondents of the study were 20 street vendors in Kathmandu Metropolitan City area which were purposefully selected from an unknown population. The respondents were chosen through my interest in street vending which is a growing sector for the urban low income households in Kathmandu who depend largely on the street vending activities as a source of income for their livelihoods. People vending commodities such as processed food products, second hand clothes, plastic products, shoes, vegetables, fruits, cigarettes, sweets, equipment used for household purpose, cosmetics used for beautification, books, newspapers and stationery were chosen in this study. The population of the respondents was composed of various types of caste groups like Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar, Dalits, Madhesis, other ethnic groups and Indian nationals.

I selected 20 respondents purposively to fit with my research objectives. I purposively selected the corresponding ethnicities, the reason women outweigh men in the list of my respondents is the overwhelming presence of female vendors in the Kathmandu Streets.

3.3 Study Area

The Kathmandu Valley as a study area was selected with a specific purpose in mind. This study is based on field observation and collection of data through interview methods. Kathmandu is a development center and the most populated area in the country. The rapid growth of population in various urban centers like Kathmandu is largely owing to the shift of rural people to metropolitan cities in search of better-paid employment or for study. The areas of the study were around New Road, Ratna Park, Old Bus Park, Jamal, Bhotahity, Basantapur, Bagbazar and Khichapokhari of the Kathmandu Municipality. These are the busiest markets of the capital and are all situated in the heart of the city where a large number of street vendors sell a variety of goods.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Kathmandu Metropolitan City area is the research site. I selected 20 street vendors from different parts of the City area, New Road, Ratna Park, Old Bus Park, Jamal, Bhotahity, Basantapur, Bagbazar and Khichapokhari, and engage with them—conversations dictated by the research objectives. I have employed observation, conversational interviews and unstructured interviews to bring the “life stories” of the street vendors and observe their daily affairs. Conversational interviewing, or flexible interviewing, refers to [survey] interviewing in order to ask the respondents regarding the questionnaire to provide respondents with “unscripted information” to clarify the question meanings (Lavrakas 2008). Unstructured interviewing broadened the scope of data as the “talk” meandered in directions which remained valuable in the analyses of the same. The two, conversational and unstructured, are explained in the subsequent sections.

3.5 Observation

In order to examine what is taking place in Kathmandu streets, and to try and better understand who is vending on the streets, I had undertaken observation in Kathmandu valley. The key benefit of observation was that it will provide me with a means of observing street vendors in their daily working environments. I have found that street vendors tend to feel unsafe

vending at these locations. As vending in this area is officially banned, they are frequently harassed by police. Rather than attempting to represent the normal vending location, the sites, New Road, Ratna Park, Old Bus Park, Jamal, Bhotahity, Basantapur, Bagbazar and Khichapokhari were chosen purposefully, in order to span a range of locations where vending is taking place, and where previous research showed that the ban is enforced to differing degrees¹. This observation work allowed me to familiarize myself with the various types of vendors, as well as the law enforcement involved in enforcing the ban and closedown on street vending. Additionally, it offered me the chance to get a sense of the variety within how street vendors trade within the city, and how different types of law enforcement work to enforce the ban. The information gathered through observation has worked to supplement my findings from street vendor interviews, and the analysis of this work supports my findings.

3.6 Data Collection Processes

I carried out conversational interviews with itinerant and fixed street vendors. I have chosen to include this interview method because it “allows a more thorough examination of experiences, feelings, or opinions that closed questions could never hope to capture” (Kitchin and Tate 2000: 213). As a result of using a face-to-face conversational method, the interviews maintained a largely informal tone, thus working to encourage interviewees to feel more comfortable and willing to participate, while also ensuring that the key research topics at hand were covered (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Though I had developed a list of topics and potential open ended questions to be covered in order to guide my interviews –which I did revise throughout my fieldwork, the exact form and order of the questions, remained flexible. This enabled me to follow specific lines of inquiry in more depth, and interview participants were also given the freedom to discuss those experiences and issues that are most significant to them in their own words. Thus, comparability across interviews has been maintained. Given the circumstances, I did record or took notes during the interviews. As my study examines whether or not vendors continue to trade in restricted areas, I sampled banned streets, where, these days, are banned of street vending for a given time period in a day, as well as on those that were not banned, but were within two streets of those that are officially banned. I did this in order to examine whether or not the ban has effectively deterred the use of public streets for trade. The

¹ Ban was announced in 2008

recruitment process included approaching and briefing vendors, as well as obtaining informed consent from participants.

Unstructured interviews are designed to allow discussion between the interviewer and respondents. The method for the interviewing is unstructured interview guided with open-ended questions based on thematic issues. To make them feel easier to share their own experiences, the setting and question-types were made in a way that respondents would talk freely. This interview will be created in more fluid situation.

Conversational and unstructured interviews are similar techniques. I simply differentiate between the two in my research context is that the first is more focused on simplifying the questionnaire or check-list which I asked to the respondents and unstructured has the usual meaning.

3.7 Sources of Secondary Data

The secondary data collection constituted reviewing the existing literature in form of published journal articles, published books, conference papers, newspaper articles, government publications and other researches available on the internet. Secondary data were used to explain and compare the research findings.

3.8 Data Analysis

The analysis phase of this research project was largely qualitative, following a process of thematic coding. This entailed identifying broad common themes amongst interviews, which were then broken down into smaller themes or concepts (Kitchin and Tate 2000). While conducting my analysis, the first step I took was to examine the data collected through street vendor interviews. I further examined the information collected through observation, informal conversations and unstructured interview as a task process that enabled me to compare vendors' descriptions of their trading and resistance practices to the visible practices that I was able to observe.

3.9 Limitation of the study

The following limitation was faced during the research study Time and cost factors were major challenges. Being a qualitative study with involvement of 20 respondents, this research is not able to bring the general picture of street vendors of the Kathmandu Valley as this research was conducted in selected venues of the city. Additionally, it was conducted through qualitative interviews of selected vendors without a scientifically designed survey method.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues were duly followed throughout the process of the field research and thesis writing process. Prior permissions were taken from the respondents before interviewing. We, I and my respondents, agreed to get involved in conversation which they could unilaterally end at any time. I didn't ask deeply personal questions, and the questions that could not hamper their dignities. Their names are changed in this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DAILY BUSINESS ACTIVITIES OF STREET VENDORS IN KATHMANDU VALLEY

Introduction

In this chapter I present key findings from my analysis that allows me to answer my first research question: who are the vendors on the streets of the Kathmandu Valley and what are their daily trading practices? My investigation is guided by the information I gathered through street vendors' interviews. I structure these findings according to six sections, touching on the following themes that emerged from my thematic coding: demographics, social capital, selling practices, income, reasons for vending and finally the costs of vending. Through my exploration of these themes, I compare my findings regarding with claims made in street vending literature about who is involved in this sort of livelihood. I show here that my findings strongly support the literatures regarding street vending. Moreover, these traders are commonly presented in previous literature as marginalized and vulnerable individuals, with low incomes and minimal - if any - access to "safety nets" such as insurance, government protection or assistance (Gorman 2008; HaysMitchell 1990). The street traders operate in the contested spaces-on legal sense-in a way that keeps themselves under the radar of the city officials and police. In the same way, they face logistical problems. The cost to their health, like in Kathmandu Valley, is huge. Their enterprises are negatively portrayed as obstructing the space of side-walkers.

4.1 Demographics

Touching upon the sex, age and education of vendors enables me to assess whether or not the majority of vendors are women who have limited formal education. I analyze the number of years participants have been trading, to increase my understanding of how long participants have been relying on this trade to make a living, while also enabling me to see whether or not individuals continued to enter the trade, after the 2008 ban. I then analyze vendor location of origin, as well as location of current residence to see if those who are originally from outside the city commute, or have rather moved to Kathmandu.

In total I carried out 20 interviews with the street vendors. Of those, 13 participants were women. Attempting to explain this highly visible over representation of females, one trader argued that men do not primarily like to do this work, so women are left to take care of it,

another suggested that women are better at selling this way because they do not mind approaching people in order to make a sale and are therefore more likely to carry out this trade. There was a wide range of ages represented amongst the vendors, from 24 to 69 years old. However, two third of vendors were between the ages of 25 and 60. Nearly all vendors had dependents either living with them, or living in separate residences. When dependents were in school, vendor's economic concerns were much greater due to the responsibility of paying school fees. The resulting economic responsibilities were often one of the reasons vendors explained to me for engaging in street vending.

Name*	Gender/Age	Education	Marital Status	District	Ethnicity
Ujeli	Female/32	Literate	Married	Sindhupalchok	Tamang
Babulal	Male/42	Literate	Married	Saptari	Madhesi
Sunil	Male/24	Literate	Unmarried	India	Indian
Jay Kisan	Male/54	SLC	Married	Dolkha	Khadka
Ram Chandra	Male/52	Literate	Married	Ramechhap	Phuyal
Nanu Maya	Female/49	Semi-literate	Married	Bhaktapur	Newar
Kumari	Female/69	Semi-literate	widow	Lamjung	Gurung
Krishna	Male/29	IA	Married	Makawanpur	Gurung
Uma	Female/36	Literate	Married	Rasuwa	Chhetri
Laxmi	Female/61	Semi-literate	Widowed	Bhaktapur	Chhetri
Mina	Female/59	Semi-literate	Married	Arghakhachi	Chhetri
Rita	Female/29	SLC	Married	Nuwakot	Tamang
Manoj	Male/38	SLC	married	Bara	Madeshi

Kanchhalal	Female/46	Literate	Married	Bara	Bamjan
Bishnu	Female/42	Semi-literate	Married	Nuwakot	Nepal
Ratna	Female/33	Semi-literate	Unmarried	Jhapa	Limbu
Janaki	Female/54	Literate	Married	Kavrepalanchowk	Chhetri
Kanchhi	Female/43	Semi-literate	Married	Sindhupalchok	Tamang
Nuru	Female/55	Semi-literate	Married	Sankhuwasabha	Bhote
Bindu	Female/ 56	Semi-Literate	Married	Kathmandu	Newar

Source: Field-based information, 2018.

*There are 20 respondents and their names are changed, literate refers to skilled to read and write the Nepali texts and numbers, semi-literate refers to skills more restricted to numeracy-counting notes and skilled at prices and profits of his or her articles.

Furthermore, eight participants explicitly stated that they had very little formal education— providing this as another central reason for their choice in livelihood. That being said however, I did not specifically ask vendors about their exact level of education, and had I done so I would have expected many of the vendors to report minimal education, based on other statements they made about limited job opportunities. What is striking already from these initial results — and what furthermore enforces the view of vending as a livelihood comprised of rural to urban migrants is maximum. All they disclosed their location of origin, were from outside Kathmandu valley.

In summary, my key findings regarding demographics and core characteristics of the street vendors corroborate what the literature (Shrestha, 2019) argues: that is, vendors are often women, and rural to urban migrants. Although they were characterized by a low level of education, several respondents did attribute their involvement in vending to a lack of formal education.

4.2 Social Capital

Within this subsection I analyze the social capital that the vendors relied upon as it pertains to social networks, codes or rules, and vendor initiation into the trade. I make a short argument here that access to social capital plays a central role of the ability of vendors to maintain their trade. Social capital generally refers to a network of relationships among the people who live and work in a particular setting, and that assist each other. Bourdieu (1986) categorizes capital, which is accumulated labor, into basic forms of economic, cultural, social and symbolic. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is a set of “connections” that is converted from economic and other capitals and convertible to economic and other capitals. He further defines social capital as:

“...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word”(p286).

Coleman (1988) articulates “social capital” within the structure that consist aspects of social structure and facilitates actions of the actors within that structure. Contrary to Bourdieu (1986), Coleman’s notion of social capital is largely neutral. The other major theorist Robert Putnam (2001) argues “social capital” as reciprocity of trustworthiness in social networks.

The notion of social capital, as expounded as a set of social networks, is close to Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988). Although Bourdieu prioritizes “social capitals” at the hand of privileged class, appropriation of which maintains their superiority, his notion of *fungibility* of social capital is salient in a way that how “contacts” or “connections” are necessary for setting up and surviving the street vending. Coleman’s rational-choice theorizing of social capital as how people in a given structure negotiate between competition and cooperation is equally important. These two strands of “social capital” are helpful in understanding how contacts and connections and mutual trust are the necessities to come unto the world of street vending and hawking, and surviving within it.

4.2.1 Social networks

The types of social networks open to street vendors differ quite extensively. Vendors, who were from Kathmandu valley originally, seem to have a greater degree of social capital, as they are more integrated into local communities. However, those who come from outside the city do seem to develop some networks once trading. For example, Jay Kisan, one of the interviewed itinerant vendors from a rural area of Dolakha district stopped our interview several times to talk with local shop owners – demonstrating that she had built rapport with individuals along her route.

“In Jamal, along this *Nachghar* stretch, we all know each other. We all come from peripheries, not far from Kathmandu. Our contacts, which anyone of us can have with KMC officials, and our friendliness with each helps a lot in selling here. Even when KMC takes our goods, we don’t feel so much petrified because we have a network which consoles us even if we don’t get our stuffs returned.”

This form of networking well represents bridging social capital, which occurs between different communities (Turner, 2011). Some of them received phone calls that informed them about the police coming, thereafter, they would displace themselves from the spot, hiding goods and acting as bystanders when the police came. There was a distinct divide between vendors who had friendly relationships with the police and those who did not. When vendors had been trading in the same place for decades they often knew their local police personally. This is an example of linking social capital, in that vendors are building connections vertically, with members of different economic and social group. Vendors who came from outside the city, on the other hand, described being treated unkindly by police in Kathmandu valley. In this way, it seems that unless immigrant vendors are linked to the police or locals, they have a harder time acquiring social capital in the city. For both vendors from within and outside Kathmandu – itinerant and fixed – there seem to be strong networks with other vendors, indicating the importance of bonding social capital – or building connections within the same group in order maintain their daily practices (ibid.). However vendors who are itinerant and have moved to the city seem to rely on these relationships more extensively than those from Kathmandu valley. They often form large groups who rent living quarters together, and will often conduct their business in the same areas.

Street vendors remain in close contact with fellow vendors for a multiple purposes. Since the start of hawking, they are supported by their fellows who were already in the business. They help them with the logistics of vending. They show the place, how to eye upon the police, and about the time when the sales are maximum. In many a case, a group of people who come from the same ethnic group, hawk the same or similar items live in the same quarter. For example: there are many such Madhesis families whose members peddle fruit carts live in Kalimati region. The building in which they stay seems abandoned, and the families are seen cramped in the small rooms. This shows that not only at the start of the enterprise, vendors and hawkers keep their social network intact so as to get help and assistance from each other.

4.2.2 Initiation into the trade: codes and rules

Being initiated into vending by another vendor seems to be advantageous but not necessary. Several vendors described being trained by an older family member with extensive vending experience. In such cases, the mentor figure trains the vendor on how to buy or produce the product being sold, how to acquire equipment, where the best places are to sell, and sometimes goes so far as to establish a connection between the vendor and potential clients (including individual residents or larger buyers - like restaurants). Similar strategies were found by Aggregard and Thao (2010) on porters in the Long Bien market. Vendors' involvement in their trade can be understood as guided by codes and rules. One of the ways in which this plays out is seen by the way vendors occupy street space. Several traders spoke of the importance of cleaning up after oneself. Gesturing towards another code, one trader described her/his practices, saying that she/he tries to avoid getting in the way of pedestrians or other vendors. However, behavior varies drastically among vendors, and while some describe a standard of acceptable behavior – or social codes – it is clear that this is not something that is considered by all vendors. These codes and rules are significant in terms of vendors' social capital, in that the degree to which a vendor follows these codes affects their acceptance by other vendors and residents.

A New road gate vendors Kanchhalal "A place is occupied. It is almost a rule that no one *captures* the place of a person. If the owner is not at the place, another vendor can be at the slot, but as the rightful owner comes, s/he has to leave the place. We cobble shoes at our own stations. I don't know how one comes to a spot, for the first time. I just came here. There were none. It's hard to get a new place. If a person leaves, s/he may give the place to another."

There are rules and codes, hidden scripts, duly followed by the street vendors. In Jamal, there are more than eight ladies in stool selling greens and miscellanies. They have their fixed spots to stay. Nobody encroaches anybody's space. The space when vacant, like a petty book stall in Jamal run by a Thakuri from the west Nepal, was used by a Bahun from Ramechhap for the period when Thakuri was at his home. The ladies in Jamal know each other's business and families. Like any social institution, the Jamal-bound female stall-owners have their codes, rules and habits that the members duly follow.

4.3 Selling Practicing

To better understand vendor selling practices, in this section I focus upon the products being sold, the process of obtaining these goods, equipment used vendor locations, routes and clientele, and finally, vendor work hours.

4.3.1 Products

In terms of products, the items sold by vendors whom I interviewed are: tea shop goods, consumer goods (including cigarettes), ready to consume food products and drinks, produce, tourist goods (including maps and souvenirs), toys, flowers, services (such as shoe shining), and entertainment materials (namely books, DVDs and CDs). It is difficult to say which type of good is sold most frequently, but it does appear that the types of product being sold vary between areas of the city. For instance, while ready to eat goods, tourist and consumer goods are most common around New Road, Bhotahity to Basantapur Durbar Square and Khichapokhari area. My observation work shows that often it is female vendors who sell food products such as fruit and vegetables, while male vendors are often selling services and entertaining goods. Furthermore, from my street vendor interviews, of the five male vendors, one sold books, two sold food that was ready to consume, one sold consumer goods, and one worked as a shoe makers. On the other hand 9 of the female vendors sold fruit or vegetables. Likewise, in the Kathmandu Valley, Madhesis and Indian vendors are seen selling fruits in their cycle-carriage.

There are different products sold in the pavement. The most of the products are cheap articles like readymade cloths, gas lighters, sweets, cigarettes or tooth picks. The others sell greens and tabloids. The Madhesis are more focused on fruits than anything. They ride cycle or

run carts to sell seasonal fruits. The vendors who sell a given product specialize on the same. Like one from Ramechhap who sells monkey nuts all day long in a cart in an open space around New Road Area. He knows everything about the nuts, where to get it, what type of nut is it if anybody shows him, and what are the profit margins?

“We buy fruits from Bishnumati bank at Kalimati. There is wholesale. All fruits, almost all, from India. We buy from there. We carry in the cycles. We sell seasonal fruits. Apples are all time a year. It was hard to get fruits during the blockade. There is margin-but all depends on how good a customer bargains. I sell at Balkhu. He sells down Kalimati. But, we both stay at Kalimati. I came here first. I had one uncle who sold potatoes and onions in Patan. He was smart. I came here. He suggested me to do fruits. So, I did. It is good business” (Ram Chandra said).

Likewise, fruit cart puller knows all about the seasonal fruits—they specialize on their articles so they become clever and pull more profit from the sale. Monkey nut seller wakes up at 5AM, and after an hour, he goes to Kalimati in a bicycle, buys kilos of nuts, roasts in a hearth in a place around Jwalakhel, and takes it away to New Road Area where his cart is. There is a story of each vendor why he or she ended up selling a given article, how do they do, how do they get the articles and regarding the emotional attachment to the article they sell.

4.3.2 Process of obtaining goods

The processes by which vendors obtain their products vary between individuals, and according to the items being purchased. Many vendors buy their goods from local wholesale markets. For produce, street vendors usually buy from wholesale market. Only a few bring their own produce from outside valley. When vendors buy their products directly from outside the city, they usually deal with farmers or artisans that are either family, or that they have either known for a long time. After purchasing goods from these farms, some vendors transport their goods, while others have goods transported by bus for pickup in Kathmandu valley. Others have family members deliver products to the city on a regular basis.

4.3.3 Equipment and stall design

The type of equipment or set-up used depends largely on whether the vendor is stationary or itinerant as well as the type of product being sold. Perhaps the most common piece of equipment for itinerant vendors is the carrying pole. This item is comprised of a basket in which they put ground nuts or ingredients of chat pate, a tangy spicy street food. Other itinerant vendors use bicycles to transport their goods. This makes it easier to carry much larger quantities of

product. However, a bicycle is expensive, and is harder to hide in the case of police raids – so many vendors are reluctant to choose a bicycle. Other itinerant vendors carry their product in a cardboard. Stationary vendors often have at least one chair or stool to sit on, and rarely a set of chairs for customers, small tables, and portable display cases, baskets for produce or cooking gear when necessary. For example, in Ratnapark, in evenings, a man with his helpers serves customers with *masuchiura*, fried meat and beaten rice.

This I learnt by myself-but one of my friends prodded me to run a stall like this. It has been two years, two and half years. Long time ago, I am not sure when, but, it was during Dasain festival. I was stranded in Ratna Park. There were two or three stalls that sold *masuchiura*, run by women. I ended up eating. They had stoves, bags of *chiura* and *bhuja*, buff innards, plates and spoons, and benches. I forgot those stalls when I went to my village. But, after earthquake, when I was in Ratnapark, strolling, I missed those stalls. There were none. Then, I quickly thought. How about me selling *masuchiura*? Thereafter, I contacted my friend who helped me with the logistics, and, within a week, I am in this corner, selling snacks in the evening. It needed three benches, wood and steel, a gas stove, some bags where I put items and utensils. I make a *chulo* in the *bato*. Sometimes, I laugh at myself. Ha Ha. It is not like that sausage stall but this is good. Profits are fine.

Most set-ups for both stationary and itinerant vendors are easily moved. Depending on what is being sold, the vendor will tailor his or her set-up to suit the products being traded. Often stationary vendors will lay baskets out on the pavement to display their goods.

4.3.4 Routes, clientele and work hours

There is a close correlation between the types of product being sold and whether customers are mostly residents or tourists. Vendors selling ready to eat food products most often sell to residents. Those selling cigarettes, lighters and maps usually sell to residents and tourists. Produce vendors sell to a combination of tourists and residents — although some vendors noted that tourists usually buy a very limited selection of goods — usually limited to items that they might recognize from their home countries. Most vendors who sell to residents have regular customers who buy from them on a daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on the product. In some cases, vendors have had the same regular customers for their entire careers. This is the case with both stationary and itinerant vendors. One of vendors, Kumar from New Road— said that for the past 20 years he has had mostly the same customers. These clients – knowing his daily routine and path — will wait until he passes to buy ice-cream dessert in the afternoon. Many itinerant vendors also repeat a specific call or use a bell in order to let clients know they are

passing by. Maintaining a consistent route and using these audible signals thus become ways for itinerant vendors to compensate for the fact that they do not have a fixed location where customers can reach them. This enables the vendor to develop a relationship with regular customers. In some cases, vendors will even give their cell phone numbers to their customers so they can be reached to arrange a purchase.

“There are no such regular routes for me. I am a wanderer. I carry this basket of *badaam, makai, chana, kearau, bhatmas* and water bottles. Sometimes I go to Kirtipur Campus, walk around the open spaces and the roads. I stay at Kalimati. I walk from Kalimati to Kirtipur while selling. Sometimes, I go to Basantapur through that mall in Teku. I go while selling. I come home during dark. I don't get time from a clock, you know, summers and winters, they have different times. I come home, when it is the kind of dark you get when it is 7PM in summers” (Sunil).

For most vendors, the average length of their workday is around 10-11 hours. Beginning between four and five a.m., vendors will either go out to collect their goods or to collect supplies to make their own product. Usually vendors work through the day — taking a break for lunch between noon and two p.m. — finishing when they have sold out of their goods (sometimes this can be as late as ten in the evening). Many vendors do these seven days a week – occasionally taking a day off for Saturday as a public holiday. In instances where vendors come from rural communities, they may go home to help with seasonal farm work. Vendor's who worked this way said they usually spend 8-9 months in Kathmandu valley, and the remainder of the year working on their families farms.

4.4 Income and Expenses

Overall, the income of vendors each day is minimal. In most cases, the profit made is just enough to cover the vendor's living costs — leaving little, if any money to save. However, some vendors have a higher income than others, with this disparity closely linked to the types of products being sold. For instance, those ground nuts or tea can often make three times the profit of those who sell fruit and vegetables. One tea vendor who sells on New Road Street said that she is able to generate between 1,500 and 2,000 rupees profit per day. Still other vendors selling outfits seem to generate only 400-500 rupees daily profits. However, in order to become involved in this sort of vending, one needs enough money to make the initial investment of buying the product. For those who are unable to afford the enterprises with higher returns,

products like fruit and vegetables, or other smaller food items can be purchased at a lower cost, and sold to generate profits between 400 to 700 rupees per day.

4.5 Reason of Vending

Just as there is a range of individuals involved in street vending, their reasons for engaging in this livelihood vary. For the purpose of understanding the complex processes by which people decide to vend, this subsection address the factors pushing Kathmandu's street vendors to make a living in this way. While some of street vendors I interviewed said that they worked this job because they enjoyed it — or so that they could have money for a few extra luxuries or leisure activities — most vendors said they worked this way out of necessity.

4.5.1 Vending as a desired livelihood

Most often, street vendors choose this livelihood because it is their most viable option. Nevertheless, 3 of the 20 vendors interviewed presented street vending as a desirable livelihood, which they had chosen because of the benefits it offers. Other trader said that they chose this way to sustain their daily livelihood. Such as food, school fee, medical treatment etc. When carrying out this livelihood, vendors can set their own schedules as needed or desired, do not have to pay fees or taxes — unless caught by the police, in which case traders may receive fines – and that at the end of the day, any profit generated can be taken home immediately. However, these reasons for vending were anomalies amongst my results, and usually were expressed by vendors that were more financially instable.

Many of respondents, one key reason vendors gave for choosing this livelihood was that they do not have enough education to get a better job. Although only six participants explicitly stated that they had received minimal education — using this to explain their participation in street vending — a reoccurring theme in vendor interviews was that they worked this way out of necessity. Janaki an itinerant vendor, who has been trading for over 15 years in the city, described her decision to vend: “there are probably other jobs that are better but I don't have a lot of education”. Given that research on street vending and the informal sector suggest that individuals engage in these forms of livelihood when there are no other options, and that a lack of education severely limits one's access to more formal work, I argue that for many of the vendors

interviewed, their involvement in this trade is likely related to their illiteracy. Moreover, many vendors who come to the Kathmandu city to trade do so out of absolute necessity; it is no longer possible for them to make a living in their home regions so migrants move to Kathmandu in order to generate income for themselves or their families (c.f. Higgs 2003).

“There is no work in Sindhupalchowk. Oh! Earthquake brought us work, but no money. I came to Kathmandu before the earthquake. I followed vending as an only alternative. I was the only son. After SLC, I wanted to earn money and help my family. I came here for work but I couldn't find any. So, from an acquaintance, I started a business of selling peanuts. I went places to places. Now, I have this cart with all snacks and waters. I survive from this cart or shop, you say. My husband and my only child live with this income. This is desired livelihood for me.”

Upon arrival in the city, one recurring concern was that they had to trade their goods informally, because they could not afford a market stand, nor could they find out when stands were available for lease because this information is usually shared between community members. Vendors from outside Kathmandu valley likewise expressed that they came to the city to vend because they could not find work at home. This was particularly true for participants from Sindhuli, Kavre and Sindhupalchowk districts. Vendors from rural villages likewise stated that there is not a market for their goods at home. Often the communities around Kathmandu valley specialize in a specific trade or skill, making it difficult to find clients at home. For instance, one street vendor said that everyone in his village makes rice noodles, so in order to sell them; he must come to Kathmandu valley where this commodity is not as common. Similarly, another vendor who comes to Kathmandu valley to sell knives and kitchen tools said everyone in her village produces the same goods as her family, and as a result, she must find a way to get their goods into other markets, whether it is through wholesale, or in this case, through street vending.

4.5.2 Means of supporting oneself and one's dependents

When attempting to understand how street vending functions in Kathmandu valley, it is important to investigate the factors that push vendors to choose this livelihood over others. Often this decision is linked to vendors' economic status for other family members. Almost they said, they needed to work this way in order to support their dependents. Specifically, 16 of them said they needed to make money in order to pay for their children's schooling. Moreover, the costs

associated with education fees are said to be extremely high, and vendors often struggle to generate the necessary income to cover these costs.

I have a problem with my leg. I can't walk fast, one leg is shorter and also, I have to wear special shoes—to hide my toeless leg. I am stationed in Jamal with other sisters who sell greens and fruits. I have a husband who works in a book shop in Thamel. If I don't work, if only my husband works, it is enough to eat, live and send my daughter to a cheap school. But, that is not enough—there are so many expenses which have to be covered like interests of my daughter, sometimes she may want color or sometimes she may want to watch a movie. Or, anyone can get sick. I can even give credit to someone who is in urgent need of cash, my family and in-laws. I feel worthy, having cash. So, this stall is helping us a lot. Working here and talking with fellow sisters don't also make me bored.

When people from rural areas lose all or some of their land, they have no option but to seek other ways to make a living. For vendors in Kathmandu the loss of farmland seems to be the greatest initiating factor for rural to urban migrants choosing to street vend. This was especially true for street vendors whom I interviewed from Lamjung and Kavre districts. There are numerous policies and processes that have affected land rights – often resulting in the loss of land for some individuals. The shifts in land ownership, as well as the emergence of recent development projects, have had major effects on the livelihoods of those living Kavre and Lamjung. Given these changes in land policy, and the instability of land ownership, it should come as no surprise that individuals who once made a living through farming have left their birth place.

4.6 The Price of Vending

The cost of vending has multiple facets for those involved. There is, to a certain extent, a social cost involved in this livelihood. Given the ways in which vending is presented as a nuisance, and antidevelopment, these critiques are often extended upon the traders themselves. One vendor went so far as to say that she could understand why vending is banned as “it's not very civilized work;” she felt it was a lower class job that was looked down upon, a job she worked out of necessity. Beyond that, however, there are very tangible consequences which vendors face as a result of their trade. Vendors who come from the countryside to work are often unable to see their families regularly. Young parents must often leave their children in their villages, since the costs of raising them in the city are too high. Krishna, a vendor in her late 20s who sells tea, has been street vending in Kathmandu with his wife for 10 years. They have two children – ages five and six – both of whom live with parents in Tokha Kathmandu. The

implications of this arrangement are that Krishna and his wife have been unable live in the same city as their children since their births. Yet another vendor expressed the grief she felt at being separated from her children; Laxmi Nepali eyes were wet as she told me how infrequently she was able to go home, saying that it is hard for her to be separated from her children. Not only is this difficult for the vendors, but it can cause stress for their families as well. Additionally street vending is extremely physically demanding. One of the most common statements made by vendors was that this job is extremely difficult and hard on their bodies. This seemed particularly relevant for itinerant vendors using carrying poles. Women often carry between 50 and 70 kilograms of product, walking through the streets from early morning (around 6 a.m.) until the product is sold out, which can take up until 10 p.m. on some days. This can cause back problems for the women, and given that many vendors continue to vend even into their old age, their health often suffers as a result. The high level of pollution also takes its toll on vendors' health, especially respiratory problems which are said to have been common among them. One notes in Jamal sidewalk:

You see all this dust and smoke, thrown out from these vehicles. We inhale and we cough. We never know when that cough turns fatal. Almost all our fellow shopkeepers are facing this problem. May be we have TB or bronchitis inside us.

CONCLUSIONS

In answering my first component of my first research question, my results indicate two key findings. First, the majority of people who moves from rural areas to Kathmandu valley for the purpose of vending to sustain their livelihood. Many vendors would rather live in their home villages, but feel that it is impossible to make a living there. Additionally, the lack of economic capital survive at home is often linked to the loss of rural farm land. As recent policies for industrialization and urban development have resulted in the government reclaiming land—offering minimal compensation to former landowners – citizens have no option but to adapt after losing their land. The second key finding is that without adequate formal education, rural to urban migrants have few options other than work as street vendors. Many vendors suggested that street vending is very hard work; it is physically demanding and offers minimal profits. Vendors must often leave their families to work, and spend long days trying to sell their goods. In response to the second half of my first research question, I have found that the daily trading

practices of vendors are quite diverse, and vary between itinerant and stationary traders. However, one common theme amongst these vendors is that their livelihoods are often physically demanding, require large amounts of time, and offer minimal profits.

CHAPTER FIVE

TOOLS OF RESISTANCE

Introduction

In this chapter I explore my second research question: what kind of actions are vendors taking in order to cope with or resist government intervention? In order to answer this research question, I structure my analysis according to two broad sections: I begin by addressing the scale at which street vendor resistance occurs and the forms this resistance; I, then, examine vendor resistance as a process, comprised of various decisions and actions, and carried out through the use of five key ‘tools’.

5.1 Scale and Form

My analysis leads me to argue that although there are many vendors carrying out resistance in Kathmandu valley – involving thousands of individuals who continue to trade in the city’s streets — it occurs on the small scale. That is to say, most often vendors carry out their resistance on an individual level, and as such their efforts are largely unorganized, with no central leader. When I asked Sita, if she worked with other vendors to resist the ban, she said no rather, described how her approach to resisting was an individual effort, stating that everyone deals with the ban on their own, in their own way ,said by Sita. This resistance is covert, and primarily takes place outside the view of the government and local authorities. Furthermore, the actions taken by vendors can be understood according to Scott’s (1985) concept of ‘everyday resistance’, meaning that it is carried out through the use of everyday actions. In this way, given that itinerant vendors in Hanoi are literally on the run all the time, the way in which they continue to organize and use street space becomes a tool for resistance (Cross 2000).

5.2 Resistance: A Look at the Actions, Decisions and Tools Involved

Street vendor resistance can be understood as a process with various stages, comprised of a series of decisions, and enabled by the use of various tools. To analyze this resistance, I examine the preliminary actions taken and decisions made by vendors in order to resist the government when they first decide to trade, as well as the specific tools used to carry out this resistance. I begin by addressing vendor initiation, which refers to the time in which a vendor

enters the trade, sometimes through the guidance of another trader. I then discuss the decision to continue trading regardless of imposed restrictions. I then discuss the five key tools vendors use in order to resist the government's attempts to restrict their trade; these include (1) bottom-up surveillance (2) alterations to selling practices, (3) the use of disguise, (4) attempts to run from police, and finally (5) the use of bribes or payments.

5.2.1 Vendor initiation: the roots of resistance

Street vendor resistance often begins with the vendor's initiation into the trade. During this initial stage, the trader may receive information, as noted in Section 4.3.1 on social networks, on how to successfully avoid being caught by the police; they may be advised to avoid trading in areas where local authorities are particularly active, or during certain times when police raids are known to occur more frequently. They may likewise be informed other ways to divert the attention of the police — such as avoiding the use of equipment known to be targeted by police — thus working to protect their livelihood (as said by Sunil). For some, this information is passed on through a family member or friend who acts as a mentor figure (Sunil). For those who do not have access to social networks prior to arrival in Kathmandu, this stage of initiation may involve gathering information through other vendors they meet in the city. The information obtained at this stage acts as the first tool for resistance by preparing the vendor to trade under oppressive circumstances.

5.2.2 Continued trade: choosing defiance over compliance

It needs to be noted at this stage that following the ban on vending, many of Kathmandu's street traders did discontinue their work in the city of Kathmandu. One tea shop vendor who has been selling along the New Bus Park for over ten years described this shift, saying that he has “noticed a lot less vendors out after the ban”. Jaya Kishan — the street fruit vendor from Jamal discussed in Section 4.5.2 – echoed this sentiment, saying that many of the people from her village have stopped vending and returned home as a result of the recent policy, deterred by the consequences of vending illegally. Yet regardless of the risks — countless other vendors continue to ply their trade throughout the city. For over forty years BabuLal has been coming from India to work as an itinerant vendor, selling smithy knives and tools in Kichhapokhariarea. When I asked her whether or not the ban affected the number of vendors selling in Kichhapokhari he responded:

“There are less street vendors than there used to be, because people are scared to get caught by the police. But still, there are lots of people who sell — they have to do their business” (said by BabuLal).

What Babulal described was the persistence of many vendors to keep trading. Moreover, there are people who kept trading after the ban, and those who only began after the ban was in effect. So not only has the ban ‘failed’ to stop individuals already working in the city from vending, but it has likewise failed in deterring newcomers to this livelihood. This emphasizes the disjuncture between government initiatives to modernize and implement short term aims that do not address the reality ‘on the ground’. In this case, vendors carry out resistance because complying with the ban would interfere with their ability to obtain the financial capital necessary for survival. Describing his decision to keep trading in Kathmandu, one vendor stated that: “creating bans is the government’s business, and making money is my business” Another trader expressed her need to maintain her livelihood:

“I have to come here to make money — even if it is illegal. If we abide by the law, we would not survive” (Ujeli said).

However, this decision to continue trading is just one among a complex web of actions that form street vendor resistance; vendors must continually make strategic choices, and use a range of everyday resistance tools in order to preserve their livelihoods.

5.2.3 Bottom-up surveillance

Given the high police presence on the streets of Kathmandu valley, vendors must exercise extreme vigilance in order to trade without being caught; as such, one of the most integral resistance tools used by street vendors is a system of bottom-up surveillance of police, by vendors. Although surveillance is often assumed to be an action carried out by members of a group in authority, over those occupying a subordinate position, in this instance I invert the meaning. As such, ‘bottom-up surveillance’ describes the careful observation of police, by vendors, a process occurring on both on a daily basis and on the long-term. When bottom up surveillance is conducted on a daily basis, it involves traders keeping a constant watch over the streets in order to sight and avoid approaching police. On the other hand, when this surveillance is carried out in the long term, vendors carrying out careful observation of the police over extended periods of time, collecting information about their routines and practices; these details then inform vendor decisions. The use of this measure plays a key role in the ability of vendors

to continue trading, while ideally escaping the consequences of doing so. In the analysis that follows, I structure my investigation of vendor surveillance according to the following topics: the way in which it functions, how knowledge of police routine and behavior can enhance the effectiveness of surveillance, the importance of mobility to this practice, individual versus collective surveillance, and finally the practical consequences of using this tool. Bottom-up surveillance that is used on a daily basis refers to surveillance that is carried out by itinerant and fixed vendors alike. During interviews and observation, I noticed that vendors seem to always be closely surveilling their surroundings; whether waiting for potential customers, or making a sale, vendors are careful to keep an eye on what was going on around them and would break eye contact in order to scan the streets. To explain this action, vendors often said they were concerned the police would come and therefore needed to keep watch. Ram Chandra a vendor described his constant watching:

“I’m not afraid of the police catching me - but I watch out for them, and move if I see them. I know what their cars look like, and I move fast so I don’t usually get caught. It’s the vendors that are slow to notice the police that get caught.”

Long term surveillance, on the other hand, allows vendors to gather knowledge of police behavior and routine. Requires the street vendors to observe police actions and – in many cases – to share information amongst each other. One vendor described how she would talk with the women trading in her region, casually exchanging details of police behavior in the form of personal stories (Nanu Maya said while in interview. As such, surveillance is sometimes carried out collectively, in which case traders may warn each other if they notice approaching police. However, quite often vendors carry out this observation individually. This is indicative of the fact that as a result of their vulnerability, vendors do not always feel secure enough to forfeit their safety (warning others if there is not time) when raids occur.

5.2.4 Alterations to selling practices: time, location and equipment

With the information gathered through bottom-up surveillance, vendors are able to alter their trading practices in the hope of avoiding contact with the police. These changes are made primarily to their choice of selling times, location and the equipment used. By observing the daily routines of the police, vendors are able schedule their trading for times when they know police is less active (BabuLal said). As noted earlier in Section 6.2.3. For instance, the police do

not begin their rounds until 9 o'clock in the morning; this means that vendors can trade during the early morning rush with little concern of being caught (said by Ram). Others noted that police often take breaks after lunch, between noon and 2 o'clock, leaving gap midday for traders to be able to focus less on watching for approaching officers. For itinerant traders, this provides a brief window in which they can take a break from carrying their heavy goods throughout the streets, as they are able to rest in one place for a few hours without a the severe threat of being caught. As vendors get a sense for the parts of the city where police focus their attention, they are able to adjust their selling locations accordingly. Rajan, the cigarette vendor who has been trading for over 50 years said that after the ban, he decided to move locations to avoid police; he pointed out that he didn't have to move far – only about a block in order to be off of the police route.

5.2.5 False compliance: the use of disguise

Another resistance tool used by vendors, that I noted repeatedly though my observation periods, is disguise. This tool is used to hide the fact that vendors are trading, and rather gives them the appearance of conducting other activities, thus allowing vendors to blend in with those around them. The degree to which vendors disguise their trade is varied. Although some conduct their daily tasks while masking their purpose, others reserve the use disguise for instances when they notice the police. Furthermore, while the former aims to be preventative, the latter is responsive. There are numerous examples of vendors who disguise their appearance and equipment while trading. Along the Bagbazzar area where polices are particularly strict in enforcing the ban – women keep products like socks and scarf in their bags. Until they approach a potential customer, they have the appearance of simply going for a walk. Some women even bring their children along, making it look as though they are on a family outing – a popular activity in this area. Yet another example is vendors who enter buses or mini buses, giving the impression that they are commuting, and sell waters and snacks. On their laps or in shoulder bags, they might keep a couple of t-shirts, books or other small products that are discrete and easily transported by motorbike. As they pass by a sidewalk, or a busy street corner, the driver will stop briefly, giving the vendor a chance to try and recruit customers. If the potential customer is not interested, the vendors will quickly move on. The second type of disguise involves equipment that is visibly part of a vending setup, but that can be quickly dismantled or

concealed, so as to erase any sign of street vending in case the police pass by. This form of disguise is well represented by a group of cigarette vendors who I observed trading at the Old Bus Park, New Bus Park, Jamal and New road area. When I arrived new road, it was evening, of January 2. There were large crowds in front of Kathmandu Mall, making this a valuable time for trading, regardless of the increased police presence that accompanied the holiday. I immediately noticed a group of about ten vendors who had strung lights from the tree above so that they could continue trading and attracting customers effectively, since the sun had already gone down. Most vendors also had a small table, and some had umbrellas. This set up meant that customers could see what the vendors had, but since the only thing on display was the sign, it was easy to put away if police pass by. To those walking by, the purpose of these traders was explicit, and the stalls were bustling with customers. However, in an instant, the entire scene changed. As a police truck rounded the corner a few blocks away, vendors quickly turned off their lights, folded their signs up, and scattered cards across their table tops. What had appeared to be an informal cigarette market, only moments before, now looked like a group of individuals resting along the sidewalks and leisurely strolling. The vendors maintained their disguise for a few minutes after the police passed by, but once the truck was out of sight, they turned the lights back on and returned to selling. By using disguise in combination with surveillance, the vendors were able to continue trading regardless of the heightened police presence, taking advantage of crowds drawn by Saturday, a holiday. This entire process occurred over the course of approximately 20 to 30 minutes. With both forms of disguise, the primary goal is to allow vendors to blend in with those in their surroundings, giving the false impression that they are everyday citizens who comply with the restrictions for street use. Moreover, vendor's attempt to hide their trade gestures toward the idea that streets are not for selling.

5.2.6 Attempts to run away

Ideally, a vendor will notice approaching police before they get too close, thus giving them time to change their route or relocate before it is too late. Kumari, an itinerant fruit vendor from Jamal who works with her cousin described their strategy:

“We try to see them while they are still far away so we have time to get away” (Kumari's statement).

In the instance that police are seen, vendors quickly pick up their goods and move. This reaction usually takes place quite rapidly, and vendors run away before the police can get to

them. For itinerant vendors, this means picking up their belongings and quickly moving in the opposite direction of the police, whereas stationary vendors must dismantle and pack up their equipment before they can run away. This was one of the most frequently used resistance tools mentioned by interviewed vendors. Additionally, I was able to observe this method being carried out on several occasions, as six interviews were ended due to police raids, and the subsequent need for vendors to run away. While interviewing Uma, a vendor trading near the Bishal Bazaar, I did not get a chance to ask about her resistance efforts, although I was able to observe. An interview ended abruptly as she spotted police from a few blocks away, told us she needed to leave, and quickly turned to move in the opposite direction. Several other flower and fruit vendors in the area followed and the street quickly became void of any traders. I waited at the intersection where Uma and the others had been selling to see whether or not they would return. After ten minutes most of the vendors had returned, and after 15 minutes, Uma too also returned to her trading spot. The success of this measure is contingent on two factors: vendor mobility — which requires a certain degree of physical capacity — as well as an awareness of police behavior and routine — or ‘‘bottom-up surveillance’’. Furthermore, whether or not efforts to run away are effective depends largely on the response of police. One banana vendor said that while some police will leave her alone after she runs away, others pursue her until she is caught; she went on to describe how police officers have chased her down alley ways, and even began to knock on doors after someone has let her hide in their room. Moreover, many of the traders began to see the importance of maintaining mobility while working in the city. Vendors must be able to move quickly upon the arrival of the police, which not only requires a certain level of physical capability, but it likewise demands that the product and equipment being used can be moved rapidly. One vendor noted that while using a bike allows the trader to transport more product, using a carrying pole makes it much easier to run from police, and likewise makes it possible to run down alleyways or even hide in someone’s room (Shoes vendor said). Another vendor argued that by using a bike he is able to maintain his mobility and therefore is less likely to be caught by police. ‘‘If the police come, I keep moving,’’ When asked if he has been caught by police, Krishna responded confidently, saying: ‘‘No, never. People are more affected or more likely to be caught if they sit down. I move around a lot, so it is not an issue for me. This argument suggests that itinerant vendors are less likely to be caught. One vendor attributed her ability to avoid being caught, putting it thus: ‘‘because I move to other streets if I see the police I don’t

usually get bothered. I've actually never been caught. Laxmi, who sells in banned, a highly patrolled area keeps only a small selection of toffees, gums and beverages and cigarettes with her, and uses minimal equipment including a purse, a couple of stools and small glass case with cigarettes; this ensures that her materials are portable, enabling her to pack up and move easily if need be. That being said, this tool can be used by vendors to effectively avoid being caught by the police, however, it requires a certain level of mobility and physical capacity in order to be successful.

5.2.7 Bribes and payment

The final resistance tool that I discuss is the use of bribes and payment. During interviews, vendors often referred to these as payments – or “gifts” – given to the police in their districts, either to avoid the consequences of being caught, or to win the favor of local police thus enabling them to maintain their trade. These bribes can be given either preemptively, or in reaction to police raids. When the former occurs, regular payments are made to the same police. One vendor, who has been trading outside the same temple for over ten years, described her relationship with the police in her district as being reciprocal; she gives the “gift” of a small sum of money, in return for being allowed to trade: Mina and Sita Said;

“We don't have to get permission to sell here, but we have to pay the police in order to keep selling. It's a kind of friendly gift — and in return we don't get into trouble.”

Giving a similar impression, two brothers who sell fast food around new road said that they pay the police in their area to show gratitude for being able to work there, and for ensuring their security. These are the security level police rather than other place. Rather than using money to bribe the police, others will give the officers some of their product. Manoj, for instance said that when the police pass by every few days he will give them a pack of cigarettes. What is interesting about these kinds of payment are that they are given on a consistent basis, they are usually payments not amounting to a very high value, and they are usually given to the same police officers. On the other hand, when bribes are given in response to police raids they are often larger sums of money, and are given only as a last resort when vendors have noticed approaching police early enough, or if they been unable to run away . Binod has been vending in Kathmandu for over ten years. When he first took on this livelihood, Binod began by selling books, and working as a shoe shine; but a few years ago he switched to selling lighters. When

purchasing his product, he buys large quantities from a factory. That is to say, the lighters Binod sell are a considerable investment, an amount he cannot afford to lose if the police confiscate his goods. If the police take his goods, he is unable to get them back, even if he pays the official fine. Rather than risking the loss of his goods, Binod bribes police with some amount of cost, the fine in the area where he sells. As such, even though he is able to keep his lighters and the small carrying box he uses to display them, the amount he must pay the police threatens his ability to get by. By looking at Binod's situation, it becomes apparent that even though bribing the police can be used as a tool to resist current restrictions on street vending – working to minimize the loss suffered by the trader — it comes at a significant cost the vendor.

Conclusions

As demonstrated in this chapter, street vendor resistance is complex and dynamic, varying between individuals. It can be understood as a process with multiple stages and points of feedback. I argue here the first stage in vendor resistance is initiation into the trade. This is time in which a vendor gathers preliminary information regarding how to conduct their trade while avoiding the police. The second stage represents the vendor's decision to trade regardless of the ban. In order to do this, vendors use five key resistance tools including bottom-up surveillance, alterations to trading practices, the use of disguise, running from police and bribes or payment. Furthermore, as vendor resistance is carried out on the individual level, each vendor's use of resistance tools varies according to their unique needs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND THEORETICAL REFLECTION

6.1 Conclusion

Within this thesis, I have considered how the daily practices of street vendors are affected by recent government policies restricting the use of public space for trade in Kathmandu Valley, as well as other limiting factors. Here, I have examined the complexities of day-to-day resistance strategies of Kathmandu valley vendors, and the factors that help initiate and sustain such measures. Because there has been very few studies about the quasi-ban of street vending in the Kathmandu valley, and of vendor negotiations and resistance strategies, this thesis has sought to fill that gap. To do this, I centered my thesis around the following aim: to better understand the strategy of street vending in Kathmandu valley, including how vendors negotiate government regulations aimed at restricting vendor livelihoods. To fulfill this aim I answered two main research questions:

I answered this question in Chapter Four by drawing primarily from the 20 street vendor interviews I carried out. My analysis was informed by the context provided in that section and was framed according to the key elements that I highlighted from street vendors. My results indicate that itinerant vendors are often female and rural-urban migrants. Those who move to Kathmandu valley for the purpose of vending do so out of necessity, as they are unable to make a living in their home community. Furthermore, without adequate formal education, rural to urban migrants have few options in the city aside from vending. While this livelihood offers a means for survival to thousands of people in Kathmandu valley, street vendors experience several negative consequences as a result of their trade. Vending is physically strenuous, demands work long days, offers minimal profits, and for those coming from outside Kathmandu, it often requires traders to leave their families for extended amounts of time. It is therefore evident that street vendors must often struggle to meet their basic needs – such as paying for their children’s school fees, or feeding their families — and have limited access to other livelihoods. As such, these individuals must engage in the highly intensive activity of street vending.

My investigation of this question was guided by the key points from the literature on covert resistance: namely that this is resistance undertaken by an oppressed group or individual;

that the success of such efforts are largely contingent on remaining covert; and that these acts of defiance take place on the small scale – usually at the individual level — and occur without formal organization or leadership. I also drew from the information gathered during my observation work and conversational street vendor interviews as presented in Chapter Five. I found that street vendor resistance takes place on the small scale, meaning that vendors usually carry out their resistance on an individual level, and as such their efforts are largely unorganized, with no central leader. This resistance is covert, and primarily takes place outside the view of the government and local authorities. Using Scott’s (1985) concept of ‘everyday resistance’, I found that resistance actions taken by vendors are entwined with their daily trading practices. Furthermore, because itinerant vendors in Kathmandu valley are literally on the run all the time, and many fixed vendors must be continuously prepared to pack up or disguise their equipment, the way in which they continue to organize and use street space becomes a tool for resistance. As discussed in Chapter five, my findings suggest that vendor resistance in Kathmandu valley is a process comprised of various decisions and actions, and is carried out through the use of key actions, or “tools. These tools represent a range of coping mechanisms that vendors (both itinerant and fixed) have established in order to carry out their resistance. Moreover, these practices reflect the innovation and flexibility of vendors who have found ways to continue trading regardless of the many difficulties and opposition they face.

6.2 Theoretical Reflection

This thesis is on the street vendors of the Kathmandu Valley and their daily trading practices; and, their tools of resistance from the security and KMC officials. From my study, I come to a conclusion that street vending has been the weapons of the poor to sustain their livelihood and make some savings. From demographic study, most of the street vendors are women, they are semi-literate, come from villages where have scant or no resources to count, and are of working ages. This is the group that is forced to sustain their families at the face severe lack of resources. Given the lack of economic capital and marketwise skills, they end up selling articles in the streets. This may seem an easy alternative, but there are challenges. The vending remains as a “lifeline” for the poor community from the urban location or for the migrants. Without a “lifeline” many a poor would have been stranded elsewhere. The spatial “lifeline”, where vendors barter, move across zones which are equally contested in-between

passerby, vendors and KMC officials, the contestations can displace the vendors from the razor-sharp “lifeline”. In order to remain stick to business, fallibility would mean jeopardy of livelihood; the vendors employ a catalogue of tools with which they play cat-and-rat game with the officials. The resistance include the pair of compliance and defiance, surveillance, disguise, running away and bribing etc.

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APPENDIX

Demographic questions of Respondents

- The general detail of respondents and their gender, age, caste/ethnic group, location of origin and education, and, the nature and location of their street stalls.
- The probe on how the respondents ended up in the street business, how they came up with the idea, whether from relatives or friends, and what necessitated them to open a stall for e.g. poverty, deep effect on family's finance due to disaster or any other problem, lack education, interest etc.
- How did they come up with the tricks of the street trade? How do they get access to the space, how do they get the products they sell, what is the profit margin?
- How the natures of goods they sell are related to the space and nature (fixed or iterant)?
- What are they time-schedules, routes and clientele?
- What are the accessories or stalls they have?
- What are the basic reasons of vending, is it survival strategy or income generation?
- What are the other costs—police harassment and pollution—vendors have to pay?
- As there is restrictions on street vending (after 2008), how do they act vis-à-vis raids from municipal patrol?
- How they tackle the municipal surveillance and defy the daily struggles with municipal patrols to keep up their business?