

University of Nairobi,

School of the Built Environment.

Department of Architecture and Building Science.

INFORMALITY IN THE MAKING OF MUTHURWA AS AN URBAN RETAIL MARKET

BAR: 613 WRITTEN THESIS

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Reg. No. : B02/0887/2013.

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other University or Institution for the purpose of awarding a degree or any other academic qualification to the best of my knowledge.

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the examination requirements for the award of the Bachelor in Architecture degree, in the Department of Architecture and Building Science at the University of Nairobi.

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TO MUM AND DAD
FOR THE PRAYERS, LOVE, AND SUPPORT

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CBD: Central Business District

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

ILO: International Labour Organisation

KRC: Kenya Railways Corporation

KRSRBS: Kenya Railways Staff Retirements Benefits Scheme

TOL: Temporary Occupation License

UN: United Nations

UNECE: United Nations Commission for Europe

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION



Fig 1.1: How Muthurwa market was designed to operate.

Source: Molisa, 2010.



Fig 1.2: Hawkers in the Nairobi CBD.

Source: Mediamax, 2017.

1.1 Background of the study

When Muthurwa started to operate in 2007, it was to be a hawkers market where they would walk, place their wares and sell as they walk. Figure 1.1 shows the market in the earlier years operating as it was designed to. It was infact built so as to relocate hawkers from Nairobi Central Business District, an issue that had become very rampant. Figure 1.2 shows hawkers trading in the CBD. Only open plan shaded blocks were provided to facilitate this. Traders were supposed to use collapsible display units. The display units were supposed to be removed at close of the business. However, the traders have constructed structures that did not come with the designed structure, thus, changing its use and design. The current state of Muthurwa is, therefore, a manifestation of informalities which have transformed the market from what it was designed to be. Informalities in Muthurwa are an expression of freedom to self-build and are also an experience ranging from the adaptation of spaces, building elements, and spatial organisation. The City County has indeed supported these informalities by adding facilities that support its existence as a retail market, for example the bus terminus.

However, these informalities are posing serious urban land use problems and threatening the operations and cultural vitality of the market. The cultural vitality of a place can be defined as the distinctive identities and sense of place that create opportunities for cultural participation, social interactions and business development among the local community (Jackson , Kabwasa & Herranz, 2006).

1.2 Problem statement

According to Dewar & Watson (1996), some of the characteristics that make markets successful include: pedestrian movement through the trading spaces which gives them frontage, presence of a public service, such as a transport hub, to attract pedestrians, spatial arrangement of traders and location of stalls to create active markets, and the ability to shrink and expand without obstructing traffic.

Behrens & Watson (1996) also add that other features are: ordering of services relating them to movement systems, availability of public spaces to accommodate the large numbers of people drawn to a market, and access to public transport which facilitates smooth operating of a market as people and goods are able to be moved into and out of the market. These are the spatial elements. They also add that there are four main physical elements that make up a market. These are: stalls or vending spaces, market buildings, shelter and stall infrastructure, and market infrastructure. The success of a market is affected by stall orientation, entrance location of the market and market buildings, length of the row of stalls in market buildings, and configuration of stalls in market buildings, with a linear configuration being preferred. This helps maximise on the interrelationship between stall and passing pedestrians.

Muthurwa market has the characteristics that qualify it as a market, however, its success is questionable. Both the spatial and physical elements that were constructed during the design stage have been interfered with informally, thus, affecting its operations. The market has transformed over the years to adapt to the needs of the traders and their increasing population in the market. This means that more space was required and expansion was inevitable. This led to extensions and spillovers to public areas as the market could not accommodate the expansion. Sections of the boundary wall have been knocked down to create more entrances, extensions have been made to the market buildings, semi-permanent stall infrastructures have been constructed and extended into the circulation, and display structures have also been erected on circulation.

These have resulted into informal extensions of the market at the vendor space as well as in areas designated for other uses. This has made way finding difficult as there are too many entrances that bring about confusion, there is congestion in the circulation paths where extensions go towards, dead spaces have been left in the abandoned areas, and lack of quality public spaces since most have already been encroached into by the traders.

This study intends to examine Muthurwa, an informally made retail market, in terms of informality, by investigating the operative realities in the market and the influence that they have on the built environment. With these the study will also investigate options of establishing better designs that can bridge this gap between the architectural built forms and the operative realities in the market.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions that guided this study are outlined below:

1. What features contribute to the success of a market?
2. What are the indicators and drivers of informality in Muthurwa market?
3. What interventions can be made to minimise the case of informality emerging in a designed market?

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this research study were as follows:

1. To establish the features that contribute to the success of a market.
2. To examine the indicators and drivers of informality in an urban context.
3. To establish interventions can be made to minimise the case of informality in a designed market.

1.5 Justification of the study

The author acknowledges that the area of informality has been studied since the establishment of the term in the 1970s by Keith Hart. However, most of the research and literature on this phenomenon has focused on the political/social economy of cities and countries, where issues to do with economy, governance, poverty, migration, human rights, gender equality, and urban management have been addressed (Rakodi, 1997; Fernandes & Varley, 1998; Simone, 2002).

Studies on the same are even getting wider in the recent years as architects, urban planners and philosophers are developing interest in the area. However, relating to the field of Architecture, most of the research has been with regard to human settlements. In the context of Nairobi, Anyamba (2006) did a thorough discourse on spatial transformations in Nairobi's urban processes where he analysed the diverse informalities in Nairobi. He added focus on spatial dimensions, which was a gap not covered.

However, there is barely any research and literature on informality in urban retail markets. Considering that these markets play a major role in the city, this study needed to be done with regards to them. This study boosted the understanding of the concept of informality and provided information specifically regarding informality in a designed and built market.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study added to the body of knowledge on informality, and especially regarding its role in the making of urban retail markets. By seeking to understand the reasons behind the informality, its influence on making of spaces and forms ,and logic of the informality(if any), architects, designer and urban planners can be able to develop alternative strategies to counteract the growth of informality in our cities.

It was also a step towards achievement of Vision 2030: The Kenya Vision 2030 aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment. The current state of informality in the market is not in line with this vision. This research study established interventions that could be used during the redevelopment of the market, plans to redevelop it are underway, so as to minimise the chances of informality re emerging to such great extents that reduce productivity of the market towards the economy of the country.

1.7 Scope and limitations of the study

Scope of the study

The study focused on examining a single case study, Muthurwa market. The study was carried out within the mapped extents of Muthurwa market. The market was chosen for study considering its attributes of transformation from being an open hawkers market as built to being a retail market with structures built by the traders themselves.

Limitations of the study

Other than architectural design influence on markets, markets are also influenced by social engagements. Therefore, the study, being an architectural thesis, limited itself within the aspects that can be resolved architecturally. Socio-economic dynamics that have influence on the built environment were also examined, but solely on their architectural influence.

1.8 Definition of terms

Informality - Practices and forms that deviate from the actual design constructed, and procedures and phenomena that take place outside the planned and regulated zones, or outside the formal processes.

Emergence - The evolutionary and cumulative way of something taking place. This term in this study has been used when referring to informality.

Market block/building - The larger structure within which a group of stall spaces are contained. The words 'block' and 'building' have been used interchangeably.

Cluster - A group of market buildings selected through deliberate action for study.

Kibanda - A semi permanent structure built using any available materials, limited construction skills, and is not architecturally designed; it suits the owners bare minimum needs, and available resources.

Hustler - A term low income earners use to refer to themselves and/or each other.

Gunia - Used sack material.

Mitumba - A Swahili name that refers to second hand items, especially but not limited to clothes.

Mitungi - Plastic jerry cans used for carrying or storing water.

Fundi - an artisan with the relevant skill or with very little skills used by the traders to construct the structures that they require.

Muthi - traditional medicine that plays a vital role in the health and wellness of South Africans.

Fulfilment centre - A large building that holds goods for online businesses for a short period, less than a month, and delivers them to the consumers.

1.9 Organisation of the study

Chapter 1 introduces the problem with informality, by highlighting the negative effects it has on Muthurwa market, a designed and built market. It gives the background of the study, states the problem, lays out the objectives of the study, and justifies the study. It then goes on to highlight the significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and also gives definitions of new terms and other terms as used specifically in this study.

Chapter 2 focuses on the review of relevant literature. The discussions include a look into the nature of markets, and then a look into the elements that influence the success of a market. It goes on to look at the concept of informality, bringing out its definition, then narrowing down to urban informality. It then looks at the indicating factors of informality, driving factors that bring about informality, and interventions towards dealing with informality. It also looks at a case study that has attempted interventions towards informal trading.

Chapter 3 looks into the research design and methodology used. It elaborates on the research design, data sources, sampling design, and the research tools and data collection techniques. It then goes on to elaborate on the techniques used for data analysis and presentation.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the data findings and analysis gotten from the examination of Muthurwa market for the indicators of informality in the market, and reasons that have led to the informality. It starts by looking into the market from the larger scale of the market's spatial elements. It then goes on to look into the architectural infrastructure design elements which is done on a smaller scale in the chosen clusters. The elements examined for indicators and drivers of informality in the market are the ones learnt from the literature review. It establishes the indicators of informality in the market, which are seen in the elements of the market, and the drivers that led to the informality.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions and gives the established interventions that can be used to deal with the informality in Muthurwa market.