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Protecting Livelihoods?:
A Study of Informal Traders at Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market

A minor dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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Supervisor: Dr. Jonathan Grossman

2011
PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature ____________________________

Date ________________________________
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of this thesis has been met with immense growth, academically and personally, not all of which has been easy. During this time I have built lasting relationships and been given varied elements of support from many that I would like to acknowledge.

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ABSTRACT

PROTECTING LIVELIHOODS?: A STUDY OF INFORMAL TRADERS AT MITCHELLS PLAIN TOWN CENTRE MARKET

Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market (MPTCM) was an informal market for over 1000 traders in the township of Mitchells Plain in Cape Town. An eviction of traders by Law Enforcement and police took place on 8 March 2010. The implementation of a new citywide Informal Trading By-law and a permit system for registering traders left over 200 traders without a space to trade. Using multiple qualitative research methods, document review, interviews, photography and observation, this study seeks to highlight the experiences and views of a group of MPTCM traders working to protect their livelihoods. The group of traders interviewed are majority female, residents of Mitchells Plain and members of two different trader organisations who sold a variety of products. Three additional interviews were conducted at Cape Town Market in Epping, where many MPTCM traders buy their wholesale produce. One City of Cape Town official was also interviewed. A large amount of time was spent observing at the market and the eviction in order to gain a deeper understanding of the daily undertakings of traders and patterns and conditions of the market. Observation also was done at trader organisation meetings and on a shadow day with one particular fruit trader. The case of MPTCM, the eviction and the livelihoods of traders is one of great complexity. The following chronological list of events and important legal procedures can assist with navigating this complexity:

- 1991 – The Businesses Act enacted that removed all by-laws or regulations aimed at controlling or regulating the informal economy;
- 1993 – The Businesses Act of 1991 is amended to allow the regulation of informal trading through by-laws;
- 1996 – Umbrella Body, made up of traders representing all trader associations in MPTCM, formed to liaise with the City of Cape Town on market renovations. From this date onwards, no democratic elections for this body were held;
- 2001 – City of Cape Town informal trading policy drafted;
- 2004 – City of Cape Town informal trading policy approved;
- March 2008 – Council decision to declare MPTCM a restricted area of trading;
- Late 2008 – CHATA formed as a MPTCM trader association;
- October 2009 – WCITC formed as a coalition to support informal traders throughout the city of Cape Town;
- November 2009 – City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-law published;
- 18 November 2009 – Workshop held with the Cape Town Mayor and two representatives from each trader association in MPTCM to address concerns regarding the upgrade;
• Late November 2009 – Tribunal formed to address objections to the MPTCM upgrade that workshop did not;
• 8 March 2010 – Evictions of traders in violation of the 2009 City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-law.

The issue of the livelihoods at stake emerged at an early stage of investigation before the evictions. Livelihoods of informal traders are complex and require a holistic research approach. The study focused and exposed the details of a trader’s daily routine, the networks and relationships that are intrinsic to informal market environments, features and conditions of informal trading in MPTCM, the concerned impact of the evictions, the legislation and policy that guides the governmental approach to traders and the eventual process of evictions of traders. These were found to be key factors in unpacking the complexity of trader livelihoods. Emerging from this investigation are central issues regarding the position of informal traders in capitalist South Africa: informal trading as a method of challenging the alienation of work under capitalism; understanding the collective and individual expressions of resistance by traders as a means to protecting their positions; and analysing the placement of informal traders by means of ‘adverse incorporation’ in a system that both includes and excludes them. MPTCM required an upgrade that traders acknowledged. However, the renovations and evictions benefitted those invested in profiting off of the development of the space, at the expense of the livelihoods of traders. This study draws conclusions about the importance of understanding the details and intricacies of informal markets and traders in order to grasp the rippling impact of evictions.

Keywords: Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market, MPTCM, Mitchells Plain, Livelihoods, Capitalism, Evictions, Informal Trading By-Law, Informal Traders, Traders, Informal, Informal Markets, Survival-Oriented.
LIST OF ACRONYMS

• ANC     African National Congress
• MPTCM   Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market
• RDP     Reconstruction and Development Programme
• GEAR    Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme
• CTM     Cape Town Market
• CT      Cape Town
• CHATA   Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association
• WCITC   Western Cape Informal Traders Coalition
• WCFPCC  Western Cape Fresh Produce Crisis Committee
• CBD     Central Business District
• NGO     Non-Government Organisation
• LDC     Least Developing Country
TERMINOLOGY EXPLANATIONS

- Coloured – During apartheid in South Africa, citizens had to identify with four denoted racial categorisations: black, coloured, Indian or white. Post-1994 these categorisations are still present and commonly used. “In South Africa, contrary to international usage, the term Coloured does not refer to black people in general. It instead alludes to a... varied social group of highly diverse cultural and geographic origins... The Coloured people were descended largely from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoisan population, and other black people who had been assimilated to Cape Colonial society by the late nineteenth century. Since they are also partly descended from European settlers, Coloured are popularly regarded as being of “mixed race”...” (Adhikari, 2006:2).

- Township – During the apartheid state in South Africa, areas of the city became subdivided to meet the desires of white rule and create segregated areas of living throughout the country. The Group Areas Act legally backed the first housing evictions of non-white citizens living in areas of the city desired by whites. Housing areas constructed for non-white race groups were then constructed outside of city centres and became known as townships. Mitchells Plain was a township constructed for coloured citizens in Cape Town.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION................................................................................................................. i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.............................................................................................................................. ii
ABSTRACT.................................................................................................................................................. iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS.................................................................................................................................. v
TERMINOLOGY EXPLANATIONS.............................................................................................................. vi
LIST OF FIGURES..................................................................................................................................... ix

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK........................................................................................................ 1
1.1 Outline of Problem and Introduction................................................................................................. 1
1.2 Theoretical Framework.......................................................................................................................... 4
   1.2.1 Capitalism in Africa and the Economics of Post-1994 South Africa........................................... 4
   1.2.2 Informal and Formal Economy Dichotomy.................................................................................. 5
   1.2.3 Traders as Workers......................................................................................................................... 6
   1.2.4 Understanding Trader Positions: ‘Adverse Incorporation’............................................................ 10

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.................................................................................................................. 12
2.1 Initial Investigation................................................................................................................................ 12
2.2 Access.................................................................................................................................................. 12
2.3 Research Site: Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market (MPTCM)............................................................ 13
2.4 Sample of Traders.................................................................................................................................. 17
   2.4.1 Additional Interview Sample Background.................................................................................... 18
2.5 Research Methods................................................................................................................................ 19
   2.5.1 Document Review.............................................................................................................................. 19
   2.5.2 Observation.................................................................................................................................. 21
      2.5.2.1 Meetings.................................................................................................................................. 21
      2.5.2.2 Market Observation.................................................................................................................. 22
      2.5.2.3 Shadow Day with Trader.......................................................................................................... 22
   2.5.3 Interviews....................................................................................................................................... 23
      2.5.3.1 Chronological Interview Schedule.......................................................................................... 24
   2.5.4 Photography.................................................................................................................................... 25
2.6 Data Organisation and Analysis............................................................................................................. 26
2.7 Ethical Considerations.............................................................................................................................. 27
2.8 Results Presentation: Section Structure................................................................................................ 28

CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS..................................................................................................................................................... 30
3.1 Daily Life of a Trader............................................................................................................................ 30
3.2 Trader Networks.................................................................................................................................... 37
   3.2.1 Trader Relationships with Traders............................................................................................... 37
   3.2.2 Trader Organisations...................................................................................................................... 38
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Cape Town and Mitchells Plain Township...........................................14
Figure 2: Aerial map of MPTCM and 5th Avenue.............................................................15
Figure 3: Informal Epping Market 1................................................................................16
Figure 4: Informal Epping Market 2.................................................................................17
Figure 5: MPTCM Morning Setup...................................................................................30
Figure 6: Fruit Trader setting up outside Shoprite............................................................31
Figure 7: Full fruit trader stand with small and larger quantity areas............................32
Figure 8: Harmony Square on a weekday afternoon.......................................................35
Figure 9: CHATA sign displayed at co-chairperson’s fruit and veg stand. Sign reads: “Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association (CHATA), est. 2008, Where Transparency Shall Prevail!!!, Aluta Continua”.................................................................39
Figure 10: Example of one fruit and veg stand with storage boxes and self-constructed covering............................................................................................................47
Figure 11: Demarcation lines on the ground at MPTCM. Black lines indicate bay markings either initially painted in the wrong areas or in locations that were later moved. Yellow lines indicate present trading bays...........................................49
Figure 12: Newly constructed MPTCM............................................................................50
Figure 13: New MPTCM area with small size of new bays apparent with person standing in centre..................................................................................................................51
Figure 14: New MPTCM area with fish stands to left and kiosks on right..........................51
Figure 15: Eviction day crane removing parts of trader stands with crowds behind........58
Figure 16: Demolition and confiscation of stands on eviction day..................................59
Figure 17: Continued demolition and confiscation of stands on eviction day....................59
Figure 18: Eviction day crane trashing parts of trader stands.........................................60
Figure 19: Chanting by protesting traders at eviction......................................................60
Figure 20: Police line formed to block off narrower end of Symphony Lane leading to Harmony Square.................................................................61
Figure 21: Broader view of police line formed to block off narrower end of Symphony Lane leading to Harmony Square.........................................................61
Figure 22: One stand in front of Shoprite by Harmony Square before eviction................62
Figure 23: Confiscation of trader goods by Law Enforcement........................................63
Figure 24: Confiscation of trader goods by Law Enforcement with crowds watching......63
Figure 25: Police line formed through CHATA co-chairperson’s stand before deconstruction and eviction of stand.................................................................65
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

1.1 Outline of Problem and Introduction

“For all the currency of second economy talk, the paradoxical fact is that in the national debates about poverty and ‘underdevelopment’ not much attention has been directed to exploring in detail the livelihoods of the marginalized poor themselves, the precise nature of their links with the mainstream economy, and what this means for their social and economic (dis)empowerment” (du Toit and Neves, 2007, p.7).

Any attempt to understand livelihoods must take into account the daily details of existence. Each day we, as humans, navigate the world as beings striving to survive. For some, survival is accompanied by easy access to necessities, and for others these necessities are sought after each and every day. In today’s capitalist society there are massive levels of inequality that inhibit a vast number of people from easily accessing these necessary resources (Hart, Laville and Cattani, 2010, p.9). South Africa stands with one of the widest inequality gaps in the world and with a visually evident rich and poor that exist together on a daily basis (Skinner, 1999, p.14). Approaches outlining and analysing the lived experiences of people surviving should be central to informing our understandings about these societal inequalities.

South Africa is a country rebuilding itself by striving to be included in a capitalist world economy in order to overcome the legacy of a past dominated by colonisation and apartheid (ANC Online, 2005). In order to overcome the high levels of poverty and inequality associated with this history, the new post-1994 leadership pursued growth mainly by means of international financial investment, however inequality gaps remain (Cole, 1999, p.24). In discussing these inequalities, the government drew on a dichotomous explanation of South Africa as that which is made up of two separate economies. “The first is an advanced, sophisticated economy, based on skilled labour, which is becoming more globally competitive. The second is mainly an informal, marginalised and unskilled economy, populated by the unemployed and those unemployable in the formal sector” (ANC Online, 2005).
Informal traders, categorised as part of the second economy, are situated in a position in South Africa where their work contributes to the alleviation of unemployment, assists with survival and often times empowers those who have been marginalised. However, informal traders are not fully supported for their contributions. Many are not benefiting from the private investment that is dominating the retail sphere. This investment is often used to formalise areas that may, in turn, push informal traders out of market spaces where they once operated. These processes of formalisation that are supported by the state are not always experienced as solutions to problems of everyday life for traders, but often increase problems that threaten, rather than “uplift” livelihoods.

The Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market (MPTCM) in Cape Town, South Africa was an informal market for over 1000 traders that has been highly politicised since at least early 2009. The media attention and political engagement of MPTCM has been focused on the “renovations and upgrade” that aims to erect a new market area, in turn moving traders from current spaces, deeming many current trading areas as prohibited areas of trade and only making room for a limited number of informal businesses (WCCA Campaign, 2009). The new market trading bays available are not equal to the number of current traders in MPTCM, leaving many – nearly 200 – without spaces to continue business (Ibid.). This upgrade is rationalised by the requirements of the City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-Law of November 2009 that is being implemented in favour of new development by a private investor.

On 8 March 2010 informal business owners opposing the upgrade and refusing to move, on grounds that they have no new space to operate, were evicted from MPTCM. Many evicted traders, referred to as ‘historical’, had been running businesses for over 20 years in the same spaces. Traders organised against these evictions, resisting by forming associations, some of which consistently engaged with the public about the issue through press releases, radio broadcasts and staged protests. These associations acted in solidarity with traders in other areas of the city who are facing similar restrictions based on the newly imposed by-law and subsequent development.
In press releases and media reports about the evictions, there were consistent references to the livelihoods that were at stake or the livelihoods that were lost: “We work each day with the possibility that our livelihoods will be stolen from us by the mere people who claim to provide us with freedoms” (CHATA press release, 21 August 2009). However, within each of these references there was no true explanation of these livelihoods, what they look like or what they entail.

In the face of evictions, many traders in MPTCM were concerned with the loss of their livelihood, but they continued each and every day with their daily routines. This is not to say they were not aware of the pending threat, but they also needed to continue with their daily jobs in order to survive. The details that go into running an informal business, the relationships and networks that dominate the daily life of informal markets, the legislation that is in place that shapes how informal businesses can operate and the threats posed to informal businesses are all important and necessary features to understand in order to holistically grasp the complexity of these livelihoods.

The general aim of this study has been to understand the way in which informal traders see their place within a capitalist system. Placement and position, although, cannot be grasped by means of one instance or event, but are instead highly dependent upon a range of daily undertakings that both place and drive traders. This study has worked towards a holistic approach to understanding the livelihoods of a group of traders working to protect them. The findings from this research will be presented in a web fashion that brings together the multiple dimensions of MPTCM and its traders. This approach means placing traders at the centre by means of directly engaging with traders themselves about their own lived perspective.
1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Capitalism in Africa and Economics of Post-1994 South Africa

Capitalism is a historical economic system that has been evolving since the early 19th century (Amin, 1972). Leading countries have exploited areas of the globe to increase their power through capital (Ibid.). Long distance trade relations drew European interest to Africa (Ibid.). Through the continued exploitation of resources and people on the continent, autonomous communities were eventually disrupted (Ibid., p.107-8). New industries and methods of production were then established in Europe in the 19th century, making way for a new age of capital where labour and money became the basis upon which production was accomplished and valued (Ibid, p.109-10).

“Since capitalist production can develop fully only with complete access to all territories and climes, it can no more confine itself to the natural resources and productive forces of the temperate zone that it can manage with white labour alone. Capital needs other races to exploit territories where the white man cannot work. It must be able to mobilize world labour power without restriction in order to utilize all productive forces of the globe...” (Luxemburg, 1951 cited in Skinner and Valodia, 2007, p.110).

South Africa’s present situation is a reflection of its brutal colonised past and subsequent apartheid state. Due to its history, post-1994 South Africa has had to focus on a process of rebuilding, depending largely on economic growth. With a human rights based constitution that suggests that the government is responsible for resourcing its people with basic needs, the country was at an economic crossroads in 1994 that required wealth creation and redistribution (Constitution, 1996).

Constitutional promises were envisioned by the Mandela government to be dealt with by the creation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that was established with the following intentions:

“Government and the private sector were to cooperate in creating jobs through public works; three hundred thousand houses were to be built each year; all South Africans were to have access to clean water, sanitation and electricity; health, education, and welfare services were to be improved; and 30 percent of the land was to be redistributed to Blacks” (Thompson, 2001, p.279).
This program had central intentions to levelling the inequality created by apartheid, but its promise was not realised. RDP was replaced with a macro-economic initiative known as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme:

“The period saw the rise and fall of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and its Office (1996), marking a shift not necessarily away from RDP principles, but towards a developmental path characterized by a domestic social adjustment program (GEAR), incremental fiscal conservatism and, increasingly central control and monitoring by the President’s Office and National Treasury” (Cole, 1999, p.23).

The shift to GEAR was rationalised by the need to create wealth in order to alleviate the country’s staggering levels of poverty (Ibid, p.24). GEAR and its supporters envisioned a solution by means of international investment in the country (Ibid.). However, this makes South Africa more dependent on outside investment and forces, agreements similar to the forced exploitation experienced in its colonial past (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom, 2006, p.31). It is also apparent that these economic policies have not always translated into a more equal society. Instead, a small percentage of South Africans benefited from the policies put forth by GEAR, and very little was redistributed to those who suffered from apartheid policies: “...levels of unemployment almost double[d] since 1994, and the broad consensus is that levels of poverty and inequality have correspondingly risen...” (Frye, 2006, p.1).

1.2.2 Informal and Formal Economy Dichotomy

‘First’ and ‘second’ economy dualist frameworks have recently infiltrated government thinking (Devey and Valodia, 2009, p.3). The origins of the term ‘second economy’ can be narrowed down to two sources. Both originations aimed to identify the ways in which individuals improved their own lives by creating work for themselves, independently from centralised power. According to Frye,

“...the term ‘second economy’ was coined by Hungarian social scientists to refer to the ‘part-time or contracted work outside the mainstream of waged labour’ in Hungary during the period of communist state control of enterprises...’second economy’ referred not to those operating at the margins
of the formal economy, but to a distinct peripheral parallel economy with its own dynamics..." (2006, p.9).

Anthropologist Keith Hart is also credited for coining the term in the 1970s while working in Ghana (Devey, Skinner and Valodia, 2006, p.310; Hart, 1973). To Hart the informal economy was when “...people take back in their own hands some of the economic power that centralized agents sought to deny them” (Smelser, 1994, p.427).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) removed the term from its original understanding to associating it with poverty defined by limited productivity and accumulation (Smelser, 1994, p.427). These associations have been nearly impossible to shed and have since come to influence understandings of the sector in Africa. “The language used to describe the characteristics of the sector reproduced the language of ‘dualism’ of colonial societies and economies. The policy implications were almost identical too” (Potts, 2008, p.154). Overall, the evolution of the term and it’s meaning then highly depends on the individual person or group who uses it:

“There is a significant risk that discussions about the ‘second economy’ may become mired in vagueness and generalities, informed not by detailed and clear understanding of the actual dynamics of inequality, exclusion and marginalisation, but by the prior assumptions and prejudices of whoever happens to be speaking” (du Toit, 2008, p.137).

Any definitions embedded with notions of poverty and underdevelopment are then reflected onto the individuals working in the sector, informal traders being one such population.

1.2.3 Traders as Workers

“Capitalism is a system in which all economic actors – producers and appropriators – depend upon the market for their most basic needs” (Wood, 2003, p.9). Thus, without appealing to the productive forces of capitalism, one’s needs that dictate survival are unattainable. Those not at the top of the chain of production are then required to sell their labour to benefit from the market economy. For Marx, people’s ability to work, their labour-power, and not just the products they
independently produce, is a commodity bought and sold under capitalism (Fine, 1975, p.23). New forms of labour have had to evolve to meet the growing needs of capitalist expansion, in turn demanding new requirements from the labourer.

The slave trade era was a time when the labourer had no ownership over his or her ability to work. Once forced slave labour was deemed illegal in most areas, the capitalist had to reinvent labour that became vague in its rights and freedoms. The key element for the labourer during these distinct periods and labour environments is freedom, be it limited or non-existent (Fine, 1975, p.23).

“Capitalists – unlike, say, feudal lords – generally need no direct control of coercive military or political force to exploit their workers, because workers are propertyless, with no direct access to the means of production, and must sell their labour-power in exchange for a wage in order to work and to live” (Wood, 2003, p.10).

The labour-power of the worker then becomes a commodity that is exploited in a capitalist system. The emergence of industrialization relied on a number of workers, some of which became a number in a line of production.

What emerged from this means of production was a separation between the work done and the products made. Capitalist expansion saw the loss of creativity in workers as they were bound to single instances of production on products mass-produced. It is within this loss of individuality and creativity that Marx noted the alienation of labour (Yuill, 2005, p.131). The concrete activity of factory labour that became required by workers in order to attain the basic needs for survival results in an abstraction of the individual from his or her daily work. Alienated labour, although, is a precursor to alienation that has the power to expand to society as a whole under capitalism. The more abstracted daily activities become, due to the markets and economies that seemingly dominate them, the less concretely connected people feel to society as a whole.

“...alienation theory can also assist in reminding us of the ‘beneath the surface relationships’ that exist within capitalism, and the essence of exploited and alienated human activity that lies beneath the reified appearance of commodities. Capitalism, then, deforms basic human nature of labour. This results in the productive activity that should be a pleasurable and rewarding experience becoming the source and cause of all that is wrong in life” (Yuill, 2005, p.132).
Informal traders do not confront the same issues or types of oppression as those in industrial environments that experience labour-power exploitation. However, informal traders sit awkwardly between being self-sufficient entrepreneurs and exploited workers within a system, thus often facing similar situations as the industrial worker. “The increasing reference to people in the informal economy as ‘workers’ is also forcing a reformulation of the notion of ‘worker’, contesting the exclusive proprietorship of this term by the traditional ‘working class’” (Lindell, 2010, p.9).

Informal traders, individually identifying themselves using a variety of equalised terms - informal traders, hawkers, entrepreneurs, street vendors, business people and traders - are all part of the second economy categorisation. Within each informal business is a multilayered working class itself. Traders, as entrepreneurial business owners, run and own their business and products. Most traders hire assistants to help with a number of areas of the business – security for goods overnight, setup with and breakdown of bays each day, selling, packaging and advertising products, and running the stand when the trader is unavailable. And assistants are often members of the family, who may or may not receive pay for the work. This dynamic layering of workers exists on a small scale, but exists nonetheless. Traders then cannot be regarded as workers in the “working class” as Marx, when speaking about selling one’s labour power, describes it. Instead, traders have their own dynamic worker structure that, as Lindell noted is evolving and being recognised, but which requires a deeper understanding of the details of trader businesses and markets as a whole.

Informal traders have created work for themselves to attain basic needs. However, their success is hindered by their access to physical space to trade. The findings in this study will reveal the difficulties that traders face in claiming and protecting their trading spaces from government. South Africa has been battling with its acceptance and statistical inclusion of traders since the early 1990s, which in part is due to the sector’s relatively young presence, “In South Africa, for example, by the standards of many LDCs, including some with currently strong Gross
Domestic Product growth, the urban informal sector is new and relatively undeveloped” (Potts, 2008, p.154). Potts contributed this to the harsh policies of the apartheid state. In spite of this, the sector in South Africa today is being redefined, growing rapidly and continually being recognised as a valuable contribution to the economy (Skinner, 2008, pp.228-29; Potts, 2008, p.154). However, the contradiction between government’s promises of creating jobs, while simultaneously controlling trading areas that results in evictions, reveals an inconsistent support for the informal sector.

A breadth of research regarding traders as contributory to South Africa has been important in redefining the sector. In the sector nationally “since 1990 South Africa has been undergoing a period of dramatic change in policy making, coordination and implementation” (Skinner, 1999, p.8). And due to these swift changes, the increasing amount of research on informal traders “is trying to pin down facts, and identify trends, in a rapidly changing environment” (Skinner, 1999, p.8). There have been alternating approaches in different cities to policy and legislation providing rights and support for traders. Skinner’s work, beyond identifying the contributory presence of informal workers and recognising their rights that are still regularly contested, has focused most recently on Durban’s collaborative Warwick Junction project (Dobson, Skinner and Nicholson, 2009). Essentially, this Durban market has been met with elements of success to creating positive renovations for traders. Over the course of a number of years, Warwick Junction Market has been renovated and transformed with collaboration between policy makers and traders central to the project. A work by Dobson, Skinner and Nicholson provided a visual and detailed description of the daily undertakings in the market, outlined the history of Warwick Junction trading in Durban and described the process of the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project that has seen international recognition for its success (2009).

Writing about informal trading has been largely defined by first/second and informal/formal economy discourse and, one step further, proposed processes of the formalisation of the informal. However, more literature approaching the work of informal traders centrally is adding to the recognition of traders as skilful,
knowledgeable, and successful people who can add positively to development that may affect them. A recently compiled work by Lindell additionally works towards this, with central aims of highlighting the agency and organising power of informal workers.

1.2.4 Understanding Trader Positions: ‘Adverse Incorporation’

Theorising about economics often becomes trapped in an analysis that loses connection with the daily lives of individuals, becoming consumed with the societal systems and forgetting where humans each fit now and today. Efforts aimed at defining the internal workings of economic systems can encourage the abstraction of economics and perpetuate their power over and above the individuals that are at the heart of them. “The economy is rather conceived of as an impersonal machine, remote from the everyday experience of most people” (Hart, Laville and Cattani, 2010, p.5).

Hart, Laville and Cattani’s work looks at the “…umbrella concept of 'the human economy' which refers to an emphasis both on what people do for themselves and on the need to find ways forward that must involve all humanity somehow” (2010, p.2). The evolving process of capitalism brings to light the fact that social relations have been broken and replaced by capital in the form of money and products. “…as social life is increasingly regulated by the laws of the economy, its requirements shape every aspect of life, not only the production and circulation of goods and services, by the distribution of resources, the disposition of labour and the organization of time itself.” (Wood, 2003, p.11). The hopes of recognising the ‘human economy’ is to expose what is being done by people themselves that are working to improve conditions within the economic system as it currently is, and in turn rebuild the social structures that have been fractured.

In approaching research that acknowledges the inevitable connection between the social and economic in today’s systems, Hart, Laville and Cattani have brought to light the necessary role that human perspectives must play in economics. However, keeping in mind the macro-economic platforms that South Africa has supported post-1994, informal businesses are continually threatened by private
investment and a continual drive to encouraging their formalisation. Attempts to analyse and understand the positions of informal businesses initially looked at the social binary of inclusion or exclusion of these businesses in today’s system. After noting a number of writers working to overcome this binary and the problematic method of analysing inequality by means of social exclusion (namely de Haan, 1998; du Toit 2004a, 2004b; Hickey 2003; Hickey and Bracking 2005), Ponte puts forward a new wave of literature that has emerged which suggests the approach of ‘adverse incorporation.’ This concept highlights the idea “...that marginality is not necessarily shaped by ‘exclusion’ (or even imperfect inclusion), but rather by the terms and conditions of incorporation” (Ponte, 2008, p.4).

Informal traders are economically and socially incorporated in local communities and society at large. However, as the case with MPTCM will reveal, this incorporation is fragile and can be threatened. There is a growth in literature that looks to recognise the simplistic expressions of inclusion or exclusion more as lessons to broader analyses of social incorporation. Du Toit has noted that this has been done based on the recognition of two factors (du Toit, 2007, pp.1-2). One points out that people are never fully excluded from society, but rather face an interaction of feelings of both inclusion and exclusion that work together (Ibid, p.2). The second feature raises the idea that poverty and disadvantage can emerge from social inclusion just as much as exclusion (Ibid, p.2). ‘Adverse incorporation’ seeks to promote the idea that terms and circumstances of social positions must be taken into account.

Through their approaches conceptualising ‘adverse incorporation,’ Ponte and du Toit have provided a more descriptive and thorough platform to approaching livelihoods of informal traders that retains their complexity. Additionally bearing the notion of the ‘human economy’ in mind, I place informal traders at the centre and analyse how they both perceive their place within this system and deal daily with confronted struggles. This will allow for a greater analysis of how inequality is lived in a capitalist society of people sustaining survival-oriented livelihoods.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Initial Investigation

In March 2009 I began visiting MPTCM traders for preliminary research done for a master’s course. I was initially introduced to traders that are part of the Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association (CHATA) who had requested research to be done in order to draw attention to the pending evictions. I attended a short meeting that month with a selection of CHATA members and government officials, consulted press releases and newspaper clippings and had unrecorded conversation with CHATA members about the situation. This preliminary research highlighted the heated controversy of the topic and was predominantly theoretical. What was largely exposed is the lack of voice that traders often have in policy making decisions about their situations. This proved to be beneficial in defining what further research needs to be done that holds the voices of traders as a central component. More comprehensive data collection then began in August 2009.

2.2 Access

In August 2009 I approached one co-chairperson of CHATA about continuing research with affiliated traders, and she welcomed my request. Due to my previous brief research, I was already acquainted with most of CHATA’s active members. For those I did not know, I was introduced at trading stands before my official introduction as a researcher at the next CHATA meeting. I voiced to the members as a whole that I would be doing research for my master’s thesis about the market and pending eviction, as well as their experiences as traders. I told them I hoped to conduct one-on-one interviews with any traders that would be interested. Further details about the research and the use of the interviews were later described to each interviewee personally. At MPTCM my presence was known amongst CHATA members and additional traders who I met through my regular presence in the market, at solidarity meetings or by my personal purchasing of goods.
CHATA’s efforts to oppose the evictions were strong. The association’s connections with traders throughout the city gave me access to solidarity meetings and people with which further information was collected. I attended meetings with the Western Cape Informal Traders Coalition (WCITC) and the Western Cape Fresh Produce Crisis Committee (WCFPCC). My attendance was initiated by an invitation from a CHATA co-chairperson and approved by the other attendees. A trader in MPTCM with whom I travelled to Cape Town Market (CTM) in Epping personally initiated access to CTM fruit and veg business owners. I later followed up with these introductions and interviewed additional people associated with CTM. Any further access to individuals interviewed was initiated and confirmed on my own, through conversation or by email. Not all people approached were willing to participate and I never forced this upon anyone.

2.3 Research Site: Mitchells Plain Town Centre Market (MPTCM)

“The desired case should be some real-life phenomenon, not an abstraction such as a topic, an argument, or even a hypothesis. These abstractions, absent the identification of specific examples, or cases, would rightfully serve as the subjects of research studies using other kinds of methods but not case studies. To justify using the case study method, you need to go one step further: You need to define a specific, real-life “case” to represent the abstraction” (Yin, 2009, p.32).

MPTCM, the site identified and explored, is located in the township of Mitchells Plain on the outskirts of Cape Town. The racial and socio-economic makeup of the area has not changed much since the end of apartheid. The opportunities available in the area are still limited due to its distance from the Cape Town Central Business District (CBD). MPTCM (prior to the eviction) was one of the largest informal markets in Cape Town, mainly serving the residents of Mitchells Plain and those of neighbouring township Khayelitsha.
Public transport to the centre consists of mini-bus taxi ranks and a train line. “Mitchell’s Plain is the third-busiest modal interchange in the City of Cape Town, with about 75 000 commuters in the morning and evening peak hours” (DPLG, n.d., p.4). The centre is surrounded by parking lots with car guards offering security and car washing. The periphery of the centre consists of the local hospital, the University of the Western Cape Faculty of Dentistry, the Mitchells Plain South African Police Service headquarters, Mitchells Plain Magistrates Court, a public library and a number of avenues that are lined with more traders. One of these on 5th Avenue consists of car mechanics and spare parts traders.

MPTCM itself is an area within an open-air mall made up of chain grocery stores, such as Shoprite and Pick ‘n Pay, as well as small retail businesses, banks and doctor’s offices. In a maze-like construction there are a number of narrower lanes leading from the periphery with small businesses on each side and trading bays constructed in front. These lanes lead to central squares that are lined with additional traders and have seating areas for shoppers. Trading bays here are either
situated under overhangs from the constructed malls or in the open areas of the centre with tents or canopies as covering. Each lane and square has a name, such as Symphony Lane, Harmony Square or Sonata Lane. Above Harmony Square there is a ramp leading to a covered mall area with the third Shoprite in the centre, all of which are within about 200 metres of each other. The ramp is lined with traders and is an overpass with a parking area below that funnels out to a taxi rank. Trading in MPTCM began on this ramp over 25 years ago and has now expanded and filtered down to the entire centre.

Further research exploration outside of MPTCM was conducted at CTM in Epping. The initial interest in this site came after an observation day with a MPTCM trader purchasing wholesale produce at the market. Curiosity in continuing research at CTM was aimed at tracking the path of goods to traders in MPTCM. In understanding the path of goods from their origin to traders, a better understanding of the interconnectedness and blurred boundaries between formal and informal business is gained. Most fruit and veg traders in MPTCM purchase their produce from CTM and the traders that operate outside of CTM gates. Keeping in mind the limited parameters of this thesis, three interviews were conducted at CTM, focused
primarily on its operations and the support it offers to informal traders as a privatised company.

CTM sits on a large plot operating as the second largest produce market in South Africa, after Johannesburg Market, which is owned by the same company (CT Market 3 Interview). Epping is a warehouse and business district housing headquarters of multiple corporate companies in Cape Town. The market is situated a short distance from the N2 and behind the township of Langa. CTM plot has gates leading to a large office building, a warehouse of distributing agents, platforms covered with overhangs for loading and the People’s Market strip with small warehouses for smaller scale business owners. Nine agents that work as middlemen between the farmers/producers and the clients/buyers operate the large warehouse. This inside area sources produce in large quantities to chain grocery stores and businesses at the People’s Market. The People’s Market businesses all have shares in the larger CTM Company and sell smaller quantities of produce, predominantly to informal traders and small stores. Most of these business owners once were informal traders themselves. These businesses are equipped with overhangs to their shops, parking spaces, electricity, water and sanitation.

Past the CTM gates is an area of about 500 metres lined with shacks that house informal businesses who make up an informal produce market. Beginning as

Figure 3: Informal Epping Market 1 - Photo by author
early as three in the morning, long-haul trucks arrive from farms with mass quantities of produce for these stands. There is no water, electricity or sanitation services for these businesses and they operate completely separate from CTM. Close to 30 traders and a number of other workers gain employment from the market by selling bags to traders, loading produce into trucks or working as employees for traders. The presence of these businesses has been of great contention for the city and CTM. Recently this issue has been taken on by the CTM Company with the intention of moving these traders from the road and incorporating them into the larger market structure. Many traders in MPTCM purchase their produce from this outside market area as many claim the price to be cheaper. Unrecorded conversation was also done with a trader who operates a large wholesale produce business on this lane.

2.4 Sample of Traders

MPTCM was a business trading area for over 1000 traders. The majority of traders in the market are female and coloured, racially representative of the Mitchells Plain area. With the exception of one foreign trader, all traders interviewed were coloured and from Mitchells Plain. Six out of ten respondents
interviewed at the market were female traders. Additionally, all but one trader has been working in the market for over 14 years. Since the eviction only three have been granted a space to resume business.

Fourteen one-on-one, English language interviews were conducted and transcribed with people that are influenced by, or influence, the trader’s situation in MPTCM. A total of 10 MPTCM trader interviews were completed: One trader is one co-chair of CHATA, eight are CHATA members and one is the acting secretary for the 5th Avenue Traders Association.

My interactions and interviews conducted were intentionally limited to members of CHATA, with the exception of one interviewee. The decision was motivated by a number of reasons. Firstly, my access to market traders began through CHATA, and thus my relationship with many of its members was already established prior to the beginning of the fieldwork and interview period. CHATA members have also actively opposed the renovation process with the majority of its members evicted in March 2010. Also my research approach was to engage with each trader individually and not as a representative of an organisation. Additionally, conflict amongst trader associations in MPTCM is strong and to avoid creating more I chose to focus my research with one association. Trader organisations as an element of networks and community for traders are highlighted in this thesis, however an analysis of all trader organisations and how they work in MPTCM was not a focus. I did conduct an interview with the acting secretary of the 5th Avenue Traders Association who supports the efforts of CHATA. This interview was conducted to examine the vastness of the market, the variety of informal businesses and highlight an association that also opposed the evictions.

2.4.1 Additional Interview Sample Background

Additional interviews were conducted with individuals outside of MPTCM, but related to the situation of the traders. The Service Co-Coordinator of Business Areas Management, Economic and Human Development working for the City of Cape Town was interviewed at his offices in the Cape Town CBD. He was contacted with an interview request via email in which I explained the details of the research
This research is aimed to put trader livelihoods at the centre of the issue and in order to emphasise this I chose to limit interviews with city officials to one. I used this interview as a platform for clarity on city actions and policies informed, prior to the interview, by documents, both primary and secondary, and information from traders. Three full interviews were conducted at CTM: two one-on-one and one with two workers simultaneously. One interview was conducted with the CTM Buying Manager who has also been a key organizer and supporter of the WCFPCC meetings. In addition, three people working for a single business within the People’s Market were interviewed. This business emerged from a trading space in the Cape Town CBD over thirty years ago, which faced evictions then as a result of the Group Areas Act.

2.5 Research Methods

Document review, observation, interviews and photography were the variety of methods used to gain a holistic understanding of the topic. These methods together provided the research with a historical understanding, a trader focused perspective and the ability to see the market’s evolution over the course of a year until the evictions. The varied methods proved beneficial and continually interacted with one another. For instance, information gained from interviews that required depth was then researched more thoroughly in document review. As Yin notes, “The interviewees also can provide shortcuts to the prior history of such situations, helping you to identify other relevant sources of evidence” (Yin, 2009, p.108). This approach of interacting methods is important and shows direct engagement with the data as it is being collected (Yin, 2009).

2.5.1 Document Review

Initially approaching the topic from a broad, domestic perspective was important before narrowing in on the site and the locality that was explored. Murray has noted this as an important feature of livelihoods research, “It is vitally important...to define the structural, historical and institutional macro-context of
such research...to set the micro-level work in a proper context” (2002, pp.507-8). Contextual literature regarding first and second economy dichotomy discourse and its influence in South Africa was initially reviewed, namely du Toit and Neves, 2007; du Toit, 2008; Guha-Kasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom, 2006; Devey, Skinner and Valodia in Padayachee, 2006; Devey and Valodia, 2009; Potts, 2008; and Frye, 2006. Beyond what was available in these resources, additional literature regarding South Africa’s capitalist economic policies and post-1994 economic shifts were reviewed, namely Cole, 2009 and McDonald and Smith, 2004. Further collection of literature and research focused on informal trading in a South African context was done. This was reviewed to contextualise the policies and legislation regarding the rights of traders, understand the struggles of traders in the past that has been documented and inform the MPTCM situation with similar other markets. The most influential of these perspectives were provided by Skinner, 1999; 2000; 2007; 2008; Lund and Skinner, 1999; Skinner and Valodia, 2007; and Dobson, Skinner and Nicholson, 2009.

Press releases, press clippings and legislative documents relevant to MPTCM and the renovations were also collected. Many of these acted as primary sources and added to the voices of traders. Press releases collected were written by CHATA and spoke directly to how the association’s traders were collectively feeling about, and opposing the renovation process. Most legislative documents collected were provided to me by one of the co-chairpersons of CHATA. The CTM Buying Manager also gave me the full text of the City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-Law. Additionally, a trader interviewed provided me with documents regarding the evictions and permit system. All information was provided openly and I was never asked to keep any documents confidential.

All documents were reviewed while I was conducting fieldwork to continually educate myself about the situation as it was evolving rapidly. As I narrowed the situation and topic, I began consulting more relevant theoretical writings on topics that are explored in the discussion.
2.5.2 Observation

In the meeting I attended in March 2009 for preliminary research, city officials working as liaisons to the MPTCM upgrade noted that their presence in MPTCM was limited and they did not often walk through the space. From this point forward my intentions in this research were shaped by a need and aim to develop an intimate knowledge of the space and setting. In this intention I also recognise the position and perspective from which my observation originates. I will further develop how I observed from all angles possible, knowing that I cannot know the market from the intricate, emotional and 20-year perspective of some traders. However, my position as an observing outsider has been beneficial in different, yet important, ways. My methods of observation were shaped by my attendance at various trader association meetings, through my presence at the market and during one particular day where I shadowed the daily routine of a MPTCM fruit trader.

2.5.2.1 Meetings

I attended seven meetings for CHATA where I sat amongst members and took notes. These meetings usually occurred in a public conference room inside the public library in MPTCM. For one particular meeting when this space was not available, a CHATA member, with an additional shop inside a mall, opened his shop for the meeting. In September 2009, the WCITC was formed with support from StreetNet, an NGO advocating for the rights of informal workers. This coalition invited CHATA and other trader associations in MPTCM to its meetings. I attended three of these meetings on invitation by a co-chairperson of CHATA and a representative of StreetNet, after we met at the first meeting. At the beginning of these meetings I was introduced as a student researcher with CHATA and sat amongst traders and took notes. During a scheduled visit with the CTM Buying Manager I was brought to a meeting for the WCFPCC, a newly formed coalition of fruit and veg traders throughout Cape Town. At the two total WCFPCC meetings I attended I spoke to traders I knew prior, but was not introduced to everyone. Some of the meetings attended were directly useful in identifying data for the research.
a whole, the meetings brought to light the vastness of the issues facing traders throughout the city and country. These issues vary from market to market and can even change based on the goods one may sell. Generally I was able to observe how traders organise, what issues were and were not discussed in meetings, from where and what type of support traders had and how information is communicated from government level to coalitions to associations to individuals.

2.5.2.2 Market Observation

I took regular trips to MPTCM from March 2009 to March 2010, at times frequenting the market three to four times weekly. I watched the market transform from its previous state to the new market space that exists now. This came with the construction of new trading areas, painting of new lines for trading bays and the relocation of taxi ranks. I observed the way in which people buy and bargain in the market, the quantity, variety and quality of goods for sale, the services offered by traders, the formal businesses that also operate, the interactions between formal businesses and traders, the patterns and fluctuations in customers, muggings and crime, the way in which traders interact with their customers, pack their goods, sell their goods, store their goods, organise their goods, hold their money, make change, interact with other traders, what and when traders eat, the way in which weather changes affect business and finally how the eviction process happened. Everything from the seemingly trivial detail to the culminating eviction was important.

2.5.2.3 Shadow Day with Trader

I spent a day following and observing a trader from half past four in the morning through her daily routine. Before the evictions, this trader was a fruit seller in MPTCM operating one of the largest stands I observed. After her interview she invited me to join her one morning in Epping and shadow her routine. I met her at the informal market outside of CTM gates. As her son assisted her with the fruit buying, I sat with her while she explained the market, the purchasing process and pricing logistics. After being introduced, I spoke briefly to the wholesale trader from which she purchases her fruit. Before going to MPTCM she also introduced me to her
relatives who run stands at the People’s Market section of CTM. We then traveled to MPTCM by a hired bakkie, and I observed and assisted her with the set-up of her stand and the opening of her business. A great deal of understanding was gained that morning and posed to be very useful in everything from understanding concretely a trader’s daily routine to the abstract personal sacrifices that are made as a result of her work.

2.5.3 Interviews

All interviews done with traders in MPTCM were initially scheduled days ahead of the actual interview. And often interviews were rescheduled due to the unforeseen amount of business in the market the day of. Interviews ranged from a quarter of an hour to one hour in length. Before the interviews occurred I asked the trader where they wanted it to take place. Some interviewees had made prior arrangements with inside businesses, as it was quieter and offered a more personal space. Other traders were not able to abandon their business for an interview, and thus I was offered a place to sit at trading bays. This became an important aspect of research that allowed me to simultaneously observe the workings of traders’ businesses.

All interviewees were presented with a consent form (Appendix B) in English that they read either themselves or I read to them. Upon consent, they understood that the interviews would be recorded, their identity would remain anonymous and, if desired, they would have access to the research once completed. In addition, it was agreed that interview participants could withdraw any quoted material from the interview transcript so it could not be used in the writing of the research. This meant I agreed to deliver a copy of the transcribed interview to each person before the research was submitted. Before consenting to the terms for the interview, I offered a space for interviewees to ask questions regarding the terms and the research as a whole.

I came to each interview prepared with a set of open-ended questions and topics. I encouraged interviewees to speak openly and divert from prepared topics. When speaking about certain topics, many interviews came to an emotional point.
During these times I let participants speak openly. I chose not to force these moments too much farther than what the interviewee offered, due to the sensitivity of the topic. Thus, the boundaries of the conversation were set by the interview participant. In the end no interview was lacking in quality due to this method and interview style.

Certain topics I wanted to raise in the interviews had to evolve in conversation and I had to adjust my language at times. For example, in order to pose questions to traders asking about their perspectives on their positions within capitalism, I often had to rephrase the questions and refrain from using words like ‘capitalism’ or ‘informal sector.’ These words have theoretical originations and play out in people’s daily lives in more concrete ways. This was important to keep in mind in both framing questions and observing the concretization of capitalism in the market. After a couple of interviews, wording for these questions evolved into asking about whether or not traders felt included or excluded, marginalised or accepted, or more generally, respected within the current economic setup of South Africa. I then probed the response and asked for an expansion on answers. This further explanation was meant to move the response beyond my imposed words that encouraged binary thinking, and instead gain a further understanding of the depth of these responses in the trader’s perspective. Additional questions asked that were aimed at a more concrete understanding of these issues were the following: ‘Do you think South Africa would survive without you?’; ‘Do you feel like you add something?’; ‘Do you think it’s important what you’re doing? And how?’; ‘Does South Africa make a place for you?’.

Interviews took place over the months of October 2009 to February 2010, in the following order:

2.5.3.1 Chronological Interview Schedule

1. Trader 1, CHATA member – Conducted on 22 October 2009 in MPTCM in an inside furniture shop of the trader’s friend.

2. Trader 2, CHATA member – Conducted on 27 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
3. Trader 3, CHATA member – Conducted on 27 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
4. Trader 4, CHATA member – Conducted on 28 October 2009 in MPTCM across from trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
5. Trader 5, CHATA member – Conducted on 29 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
6. Trader 6, CHATA member – Conducted on 4 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
7. Trader 7, CHATA member – Conducted on 4 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
8. Trader 8, CHATA member – Conducted on 6 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Harmony Square.
9. Trader 9, CHATA member – Conducted on 17 November 2009 in MPTCM at an inside food shop of the trader’s friend.
10. Trader 10, Secretary of 5th Avenue Traders Association – Conducted on 17 November 2009 on the outskirts of MPTCM near trader’s fruit and veg stand on 5th Avenue.
11. CT Market 1 – Conducted on 16 December 2009 – At CTM in Epping. Was a joint interview with two workers of the same family business in the People’s Market.
12. CT Market 2 – Conducted on 31 December 2009 at CTM in Epping where worker runs family fruit and veg business in the People’s Market.
13. CT Market 3 – Conducted on 9 March 2010 at CTM offices in Epping with the company’s buying manager in his offices inside business building.
14. CT Official – Conducted on 15 February 2010 at official’s office in City of Cape Town Civic Centre building in the CBD.

2.5.4 Photography

I photographed a number of locations and features of the MPTCM. Photographs were taken to assist in my visual representation and explanation of the market. These photographs were also given to a CHATA chairperson to use in any
further way she saw necessary. I began photographing features of MPTCM from August 2009 up to the evictions in March 2010. The photographs have been beneficial to representing the change in the marketplace, the new covered market, the actual day of eviction and features of the upgrade, such as the new trading bay demarcations. Additionally, I documented the observation day with the fruit trader, which began in Epping. During the writing of this research these photographs were helpful in visually reminding myself of the market as it does not look the same today.

2.6 Data Organisation and Analysis

I collected an immense amount of data over a fieldwork period of nearly six months. I limited the breadth of the findings to information I found directly pertinent and essential to reaching the aims of the research in the write-up. There is a great deal of additional information and avenues of research that could have been explored, as the topic can be approached from a number of perspectives. Therefore, once the fieldwork period ended, data was organised in such a way that made it more manageable to analyse. This organisation period also worked to notice patterns that would be further explored in write-up. All notes from secondary documents were typed and compiled. Primary documents, such as press releases, written legislation, letters and press clippings, were dated and bound. All fieldwork diaries, observation notes and photographs were collected, dated and revisited regularly during the writing period.

All interviews conducted were transcribed word for word. After all transcripts were completed I grouped them into four categories: CHATA traders, non-CHATA traders, CTM associated persons and Cape Town City official. I thoroughly read and re-read each interview. In the process of reading transcripts I began identifying key themes that emerged from them individually. Once these were identified I went through a process of selective coding: “The process of selecting a core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and
development” (Strauss and Corbin 1990 cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2001, p.500). I looked for common emerging themes within transcripts in the same category, and then subsequently looked for commonalities between categories. Themes were then listed and common connections between different ones were identified and joined, forming a storyline between issues. A larger storyline and outline was created that became the basis for the themes chosen to explore in the write-up. This outline also incorporated information from other research methods and became the skeleton outline for the findings section.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

All ethical guidelines were followed through the University of Cape Town’s Faculty of Humanities guide to research ethics for research on human subjects. These were followed to ensure a safe space for the people I worked with to complete this research. Having human respondents in any research is guided by an element of respect that one has for the willingness of the respondent to participate in the first place. Additionally, this research brings to light and exposes details of the daily life of humans. Thus, strict ethical guidelines had to be followed when collecting information.

As was detailed in writing about the interview process, all interviews conducted were done with agreed consent and to a set of terms. All features of the agreed consent were met where possible. I promised all interviewees a copy of their transcribed interview and gave them the right to withdraw or change any quotes from the transcript to be used in the write-up of the research. I made an attempt to contact all interviewees to deliver completed transcripts, but due to the evictions many traders were unable to be located after 8 March 2010. I pursued this promise by attempting to contact some traders through others and by telephone. I am still to reach several of the interviewees.

All interviewees were also told that their names would be kept anonymous in the write-up of the research. I replaced all interviewee names with numbers based
on the categories that the transcripts fell into and referred to all interviewees in the thesis with these codes.

All interviews were conducted in English, with one, however, beginning in Afrikaans. For this interview a family member working with the interviewee acted as a translator. When scheduling the interview the interviewee did not indicate wanting a translator, so I was not prepared to offer one independently. This interview, however, continued in English after five minutes when the interviewee ceased to speak in Afrikaans on his own volition.

Some interviews brought forward emotional elements for the individuals interviewed. I was never told to stop an interview for this reason, but had to tread lightly at times when emotion was expressed physically. I allowed some individuals to bear tears and work through their emotions during the course of interviews. In addition, all interviewees always had the right to refuse answering any question or be recorded. This was respected when requested, as was the case during one interview when I was asked to suspend recording.

Due to deep-rooted, historical tensions amongst trader organisations in MPTCM, my choice to research only within CHATA was also guided by an ethical understanding of my presence and position as a researcher. Understanding some of the dynamics of relations between traders in MPTCM was important for the topic, but my research intention was not to unpack the workings of trader associations. When this then became a topic of discussion in an interview I allowed individuals to speak about it, but I did not further pursue these issues.

2.8 Results Presentation: Section Structure

The research findings begin in chapter three, organised in five different sections addressing what was found using all the methods described above. The first section presents the daily life of a trader and outlines a visual depiction, setup and daily play out of MPTCM. Section two looks at the networks and community dynamics that exist by means of the market. Section three presents the conditions that traders face daily and the features of MPTCM that traders would like to see
improved. Section four then addresses the ways in which traders were allowed to object to the eviction process, highlighting trader perceptions of these options. Section five outlines and describes the occurrence of the eviction on 8 March 2010 in MPTCM. This section moves to describing the effects of the evictions that traders were concerned about. Further outlined is the found reasoning behind the eviction, detailing legislative and business frameworks. The fourth chapter moves to discussing the complexity of trader livelihoods with three topics that emerged through processes of analysis and data organisation. These topics explore alienation and traders, expressions of resistance by traders aimed at protecting their self-created livelihoods and the positions of traders in present society as analysed by means of ‘adverse incorporation.’ Overall, the work details the lives and confronted situations of informal traders in hopes to understand the complexity of their livelihoods and societal positions.
CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS

3.1 Trader Daily Life

“I’m a hawker and I’m proud to be a hawker because it’s a honest living” (Trader 7 Interview).

MPTCM operates seven days a week. However, the market never truly sleeps, nor is void of people using the space to make a living, purchase household products or even have a night’s sleep. The MPTCM starts to come alive as early as six in the morning with some traders beginning business this early.

The workday hours for a trader are highly dependent upon the products sold. Fruit and veg traders who must repurchase goods each morning will begin buying from larger markets as early as four. These traders are then usually the first to set up their stands. One particular fruit trader travels each morning with her son to Epping, watching the sun rise above Table Mountain every market day, to purchase their fruit stock at wholesale. “I go every morning...4 o’clock I’m in the market”
Markets in Epping, both The People’s Market and the informal one disassociated from CTM, are produce suppliers to traders in MPTCM.

This fruit trader purchases fruit from the same informal business outside the CTM gates each morning. She has built a working relationship with the owner who works each morning with her son on pricing. The consistency of her purchases has built a foundation of trust that, if needed, allows her to receive goods on a consignment basis. In order to transport the goods to and from MPTCM, she hires a man to assist her with a bakkie each day, at a rate of R150 per trip. She and her son part ways after he assists her with the morning purchasing in Epping. She then travels with the bakkie to MPTCM to begin setup at half past five. Her stand is one of the first to begin setup in the market, but soon after, the market starts to come alive with more traders.

This particular trader operates her stand outside of the front of one of the Shoprite stores just off of Symphony Lane.

![Figure 6: Fruit trader setting up outside Shoprite - Photo by author](image)
“...Shoprite never had a problem with me...Because why if it’s on a holiday and it’s quiet and they supposed to close late then they’ll come and ask me what time I am packing up. If I say right I am gonna pack up it’s quiet, they say they also gonna close their doors early because why, it’s, it’s dead here, it’s like a dungeon then it’s quiet. Because when I’m here they still know it’s fine” (Trader 7 Interview).

Shoprite opens their doors about a half an hour after her stand begins setup. The relationship that this trader has with neighbouring shops and businesses is consistent with other traders interviewed. These shops have acknowledged their support for traders, by both these relationships and in written letters.

This fruit trader is assisted with unloading the bakkie by a man who sleeps in the centre and also watches her goods at night:

“...he sleeps here yes and his girlfriend is sleeping here. They watching a few stands here. And I never had a complaint. Nothing ever goes missing here. Not even a piece of plank or a broom. Nothing gets taken here. In the morning when I come out of the market he will be there, he will load off the bakkie for me and as he load off I will buy coffee for him. As he’s busy he’ll drink his coffee too. I will see to him” (Trader 7 Interview).

He is compensated with R10 each night and coffee each morning.

The setup of this druit stand begins with the unpacking of boxes left from the previous day and stored overnight on top of one another. Wooden planks, acting as the stand’s foundation, are unloaded and laid out for fruit boxes to be displayed on

\[Figure 7: Full fruit trader stand with small and larger quantity areas - Photo by author\]
top throughout the day. Overnight these planks are used to build a storage cube to protect leftover fruit. Her stand operates in two parts, each plank area with fruit is about six square metres in size. The first area is her wholesale area. Here she sells larger quantities of fruit to either smaller traders, who will then sell door-to-door, or for people needing larger quantities. The second is the area directly outside of the Shoprite windows. She stands here all day packaging small quantities of fruit for customers and collecting money. After she unpacks her planks and sets up the base areas of the stand she sweeps around her bay, tidying the area from the day and night before.

Another hired employee assists her with the unloading of goods and customer service related tasks. This helper verbally advertises about the fruit and its price to passing customers throughout the day, and helps to restock fruit displayed at the stand. She pays her helper R70 a day and “I got to see that he get his food during the day, that comes also out of my pocket” (Trader 7 Interview). In addition, her daughter works as an assistant sporadically when extra help is needed. Over the course of my fieldwork period, her assistant ceased working for her and her daughter then replaced him.

As her stand begins to take shape and is unpacked, more and more traders begin trickling into MPTCM, stopping in to say good morning before setting up their own stands. Two other traders, selling both produce and fish, come to collect their stored produce at this trader’s fruit stand, which is also watched overnight by the couple sleeping in MPTCM. Shoprite grocery store and the Hungry Lion fast food shop behind the fruit trader open their doors around this time. All the workers at these businesses address her warmly and employees of Hungry Lion bring coffee to her and her helpers. At this point in time the stand is set and the remaining work to be done is filling containers with small quantities of fruit. These containers are sold at five rand a piece, while wholesale quantities are R10 to R20 above the price paid in Epping.

Each morning this trader’s stand is set up in the same way, displaying fruit in clear plastic containers. Many traders organise their produce in small bags for sale, but she displays her fruit in containers first and then transfers it to bags once it is
purchased. She sifts through the larger boxes of produce purchased each morning to fill the display containers. She discards any fruit that is too bruised or cut to sell. Additionally, she organizes the containers based on the ripeness of the fruit, selling to customers based on when they plan to eat it. From this point forward, her business is open to customers moving in and out of MPTCM. Due to her early start she begins selling to people on their way to work, as early as six o’clock. Her customer base has been built upon her consistent market presence, opening her stand earlier than most and selling to commuters and shop owners.

“They support me, they will always support me cause I’m always there for them...Standard, Absa, Ackerman’s, Choice and Shoprite and I got the doctors there that side. I got the medical doctors, I got the Court’s people. And they ask me, ‘Why do they want to move you?’ ‘Why must we go look for you?’ We built a very close relationship, we were like a family here” (Trader 7 Interview).

One particular customer who works for a dentist in the area brings a hot breakfast to this trader each morning and is given a packet of fruit in exchange. The customer will choose her fruit as she enters the market from her transport and then return with a bowl of hot porridge. Additionally, school kids walking through the market in the morning are often given free fruit on their way to their transport. The mornings highlight the community that exists in MPTCM amongst traders and customers. Just as any office operates, gossip, details of the night before and talk about what is to come during the day are all discussed in the first hours of business.

By about seven o’clock, most other stands are set up and beginning operation. Fish sellers will bring in their first shipment of the day, often times with a second in the afternoon, and begin organising their stands to clean and cut fish for customers. Each stand opens and operates differently and much of this depends on the product sold. Smaller stands selling spices, under garments, clothing, shoes, cigarettes, airtime or kitchen supplies don’t require traders to purchase inventory each morning, and therefore these traders often arrive and begin operation after produce and fish sellers.

After the morning rush, the chaos of the market depends on a number of factors: weather, day of the week and day of the month. The weekends are generally
very chaotic with MPTCM being one of few in the city to operate seven days a week. Saturdays are very crowded with children out of school and most people working during the week. On these days, the market tends to operate as a social centre with whole families coming to shop and socialize. Usually on Saturdays with nice weather, a DJ sets up large speakers in Harmony Square and plays music and broadcasts radio talk shows throughout the day.

Some stores in the outer lanes also use large speaker equipment and microphones to advertise their stores and play music, both drawing in customers and entertaining people. Due to the crowds that come to the market on the weekends, some traders operate stands on these days only. The crowded lanes then are not only a factor of more customers, but also more traders. This has become an issue of concern for both traders and the city. Daily traders expressed concern with those trading for supplemental income on the weekends. The city sees the weekend and holiday traders as an additional reason to implement a permit system that will manage a consistent population of traders.
The day of the month is also a consideration for market crowds. MPTCM is very busy the day after either paychecks or social grant checks are issued. This generally brings in a different group of people than that which comes on weekends. Social grant recipients, elderly persons, grandmothers or mothers running the household usually come on these days with young children not old enough for school. Necessities are then mainly purchased: clothing, food, toilet paper and spices.

MPTCM will continue to operate throughout each day until about five or six o’clock in the evening. The evening rush hour from the transport hubs brings in a similar amount of business as the morning rush. Traders can never be certain when their workday is complete, as their income is greatly controlled by customer flow. One trader who has a cigarette, airtime and produce stall speaks about the day’s end:

“I must be finished at five o’clock, but I can’t be at home five o’clock because I’m waiting for the last train here in Mitchells Plain. This is about half past six and if I serve that people there’s more coming and shouting ‘Please, please I want a cigarette’ or whatever. Sometimes I don’t like it but I must serve them because it’s money coming in to buy new stock for me for tomorrow or whatever” (Trader 9 Interview).

The evening rush brings a large population of people back into the market, but it is also met with traders packing their stands for the night. The fruit trader packs her stand with the wood planks encasing the remaining fruit not sold from the day. Her boxes and planks then act as a storage facility for her goods that will remain overnight. Most traders do not have sufficient space at home to store their goods overnight, encouraging the issue of needed storage facilities, which will be expanded upon later. Constructed coverings and tents made by traders for stands remain in tact at night as many are made with nailed wood and metal rods or attached to neighbouring trees. Tarps draped over tables throughout the day cover constructed storage at night. The evening rush slowly dies and the last remaining people leave the MPTCM around half past six each evening. The market then returns to its once quiet state with only those staying overnight remaining.


3.2 Trader Networks

The market community that is largely defined by formed trader networks emphasises the significance the market and its people play in each other’s lives, beyond the obvious income generation. The following important networks were found to exist: trader relationships with other traders, trader organisations and trader relationships with surrounding community and customers.

3.2.1 Trader Relationships with Traders

Due to the market operating seven days a week and nearly ten hours daily, some traders can spend more time running their businesses than at home. This has led to the formation of familial relationships amongst traders, mainly with those operating business near one another. A key feature of these relationships is support: “And the people around me here, we are family. If I haven’t got money I will say, ’Mrs. Brown I need so long a 50 Rand, I need a 100 Rand’, she will give me...We always there to help each other here. We just not at home, but we family here too” (Trader 7 Interview). Small gestures of outreach to one another, in the form of food, sweets, cool drinks, change, small loans, physical assistance or transport are offered on a daily basis between traders, adding to a supportive market environment.

“Because that is our main thing here in the Town Centre...learning to learn to, to have respect for each other. Learn not to have jealous, to have jealousy amongst each other because we all come from the same thing here. I don’t know what’s on your plate, you don’t know what’s on my plate, but we need to be there for each other to assist each other. When I’m in a crisis, I need to be there for you when you’re in a crisis...” (Trader 5 Interview).

Support has manifested itself in a number of ways from traders collectively fighting to stay in their current spaces to purchasing their household needs from one another. This spectrum of efforts helps to keep the market community alive.

“But let’s say we must look to each and everybody...we must sort of help one another informally, okay? And to say okay to buy from one another also so that the businesses keep and going on between the informal traders...” (Trader 1 Interview).
This point of buying products from other traders was also raised in a meeting for CHATA. Purchasing products from a fellow trader is one concrete element that helps traders financially and encourages the deeper notion of support that strengthens the trader community.

3.2.2 Trader Organisations

Trader organisations in MPTCM are numerous, have been a powerful platform for collective voices and often determine with whom traders interact. Due to the upgrade, some lanes are newly deemed restricted trading areas, while others are only being renovated with new demarcated bays. Thus, each area of MPTCM has its own set of issues. Traders operating businesses in the same areas then often create trader associations together. About 15 years ago, the city of Cape Town encouraged the unification of traders in MPTCM with the election of representatives to liaise between traders and the city. This ‘Umbrella Body’ brought together representatives from all trader associations in MPTCM at the time. However, in a 15-year period, no elections were held to democratically elect representatives. Politics and conflict has arisen regarding this ‘Umbrella Body’ and as a result, some traders have started new associations. These politics are too complicated to fully outline here, but they will be raised slightly due to their effects on the market community. Two trader organisations in MPTCM were explored, each facing alternate issues brought to light from the upgrade, but both in opposition to its planned implementation.

3.2.2.1 Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association (CHATA)

CHATA was formed in late 2008 by a group of traders who felt there was a lack of transparency and consultation emerging from the ‘Umbrella Body’ association of traders, which was collaborating with the city on details of the renovation. CHATA has a written association constitution and a claimed registered membership of nearly 200 traders. There are two acting chairpersons, one female and one male. Most CHATA members are female, coloured and residents of Mitchells Plain, which is representative of the greater population of market traders. Meetings
organised by the association addressed and delivered information pertinent to the looming evictions, occurring once a week when the evictions were pending. Additional impromptu meetings were organised as information became available and efforts to react to information needed to be immediate, requiring traders to sometimes attend meetings during trading hours. Information, known by other members or the chairpersons, for CHATA members is generally communicated at meetings or by word-of-mouth in the market. CHATA has been publicly vocal about the market upgrade, promoting the cause via outside organisations and the media. CHATA representatives have spoken on radio programs, attended meetings with other solidarity associations throughout the city, namely WCITC and WCFPCC, and written press releases regularly in 2009 and early 2010.

Figure 9: CHATA sign displayed in MPTCM at co-chairperson’s fruit and veg stand. Sign reads: “Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association (CHATA), est. 2008, Where Transparency Shall Prevail!!!, Aluta Continua” - Photo by author

Most CHATA members trade in Symphony and Sonata lanes in MPTCM. Due to these lanes now being deemed restricted trading areas, all trading bays in these lanes were to be cleared. Most traders in these areas were not given an alternative space to continue business in the new market, and were thus forcefully evicted from
their old bays without alternative spaces. Due to more traders with businesses in MPTCM than new bays available, not all traders were granted spaces that applied for them. This issue was at the forefront of CHATA’s criticism to the upgrade as the evictions then meant not just a move for many traders, but instead a complete loss of trading space altogether.

CHATA is also in opposition to the new system of trading permits. With the construction of the new market space also came the implementation of a new system of trading that is a feature of the City of Cape Town’s Informal Trading By-law published in November 2009. The new permit system requires traders wanting space in restricted trading areas to apply for a permit allowing them to trade. In order to obtain and keep a permit, traders must meet a number of requirements and standards, which are outlined in the By-Law. Details of both the by-law and permit system will be outlined in section 3.5.2. CHATA, however, opposed this new system and the way in which the bay allocation process occurred. All traders who were granted a space in the new market were given letters notifying them of their successful application. This letter gave traders new bay numbers, as well as the date by which they were expected to fetch permits and then relocate. Due to most CHATA members being without a new bay, CHATA agreed that no member would fetch permits as a mean of protest. This protest was meant to make the point that if one trader is without a space, then no traders should be with a space. Additionally, CHATA saw this protest as a means to opposing the permit system as a whole, which they see as a tool to controlling the informal sector and those in it, requiring standards that limit business and hinder independence. Details of this protest were planned and communicated at an association meeting. However, in conducting this protest, members given new spaces to trade would be forfeiting these bays to support to overall cause of the association. Most members protested, but some still fetched their permits as they were worried about the repercussions of being left without a space to continue business.

Stemming from the interviews, it became apparent that for members, CHATA is a feature of support in an environment where most are feeling sidelined by the upgrade. “And every time we are in meetings and that, every time we are in the
library and we have meetings, and as times and as days pass by, you see it’s the truth that they are talking about in the library...” (Trader 4 Interview). This trust in the association has evolved for many into a feeling of security that they have in being a member. And although not all opposition efforts spearheaded by CHATA have been successful and the eviction eventually took place, the willingness of members to contribute both their time and money to efforts proves their faith in the association. As a unified association, the sense of solidarity and security that CHATA created for its members was inextricably important.

3.2.2.2 5th Avenue Traders Association

The 5th Avenue Traders Association was established 20 years ago and now has a close-knit membership of 78 traders. The association prides itself on its clear structure of representative hierarchy, with elected chairpersons, secretary, treasurer and a bonded community of traders that have worked next to one another for years. This association was created to offer representation for traders along 5th Avenue, on the periphery of the Town Centre next to a taxi rank. Traders on this avenue operate different businesses that are not possible in the central market due to space constraints. The following types of businesses exist: “Car mechanics, welding, brick and stalls, the caravans, it’s our boerwors stalls, fruit and veg, our haberdashery stalls, clothing stalls. It’s quite a number of, of commodity that’s ranging here” (Trader 10 Interview). This association additionally runs community outreach projects and offers financial support to members in times of need.

“What we do is the funds is there if anyone of our members are in financial difficulties then they can come to the organisation and the organisation will help them. If one of our immediate families die then the organisation contributes towards that. And if, so say for instance you get in trouble with the law. In trouble with the law and then what they do is they help you with the legal side as well” (Trader 10 Interview).

The association has also worked in solidarity with other organisations in the centre, namely CHATA and taxi associations, and is represented as part of the WCITC.

The physical differences of the trading spaces and types of businesses operated on 5th avenue from the ones in the Town Centre have left the association
with a varying set of issues in the market upgrade process. For example, in order for car mechanics to run a profitable business on 5th Avenue, they must have space for the cars, usually two, to park. Alternatively, the largest trading bay observed in the Town Centre was about ten square metres in size. So although the plight of traders in and around MPTCM is stronger when fought collectively, different focal issues must be recognised.

In reacting to the upgrade, the 5th Avenue Traders Association has offered their input regarding renovations to the areas where they currently trade. The association approached council with a proposal to lease the land that the city wanted to renovate on 5th avenue. They felt that their knowledge, skills and organizational leadership would make them more fit to govern and upgrade the space on their own. However, these suggestions were not accepted, and instead the city has implemented a plan that has negatively affected business for many traders on 5th Avenue – limiting the size and number of bays that resulted in reduced business. The association’s history adds to its strength. Their active strides in proposing alternatives to the upgrade is a unique feature of their opposition.

3.2.3 Association Conflicts: Divide and Rule Tactic

As discussed earlier, conflict exists amongst and between various trader associations in MPTCM. Most of this conflict expressed by CHATA and the 5th Avenue Traders Association was centralised on the lack of support for the Umbrella Body. The Umbrella Body rests on the idea that the people who are elected are traders themselves, in the market daily and with the ability to sympathise with trader interests, needs and requests.

Over the course of its existence, the ‘Umbrella Body’ did not satisfy all traders and for many interviewed was not seen to be acting in trader interests.

“So what I expected from the Umbrella Body, they had to be there for us, they had to make things possible for us because they are there at government. They know our circumstances here. They know how we live, how we must sell every day to put food on the table...So you tell me, how can they because the Umbrella Body take our market and just sell out, sell it out like that. Why couldn’t they compromise? Get us all together. Every month they used to have meetings, why couldn’t they come to us and say ‘This is what Council is
saying, what are you saying?, what can we do for you?” (Trader 5 Interview).

Many frustrations about the Umbrella Body’s work are related to the lack of a democratic election of representatives. “How can you have the same people on the same committee? And this is like never, um new elections done in over, almost over 15 years. That is ridiculous. And how, I mean council is been dealing with the same people and they know that no elections is done” (Trader 3 Interview). Some traders called into question the way in which the Umbrella Body has communicated information about the market upgrade.

“I can’t understand why they going to meetings every week and every month with council and don’t filter anything down to the trader...And I don’t understand how they can make decisions without taking any mandate from the traders...If you are representing us, you were elected by us, so then you must come down to ground level...You know we didn’t know about the business plan. And when I ask the city officials why didn’t they tell us about it, what was their response to me? ‘You not there on top.’ That’s what they answered to me.” (Trader 3 Interview).

Apparent in interviews is the idea that the City perpetuated the conflict regarding the Umbrella Body by not consulting with associations that did not support the body.

“So isn’t it time by now, Laura, that the City had to take this and, and take this initiative in their own hands? And have called onto the people like, this is seven organisations who cannot see eye to eye, I’m canning it, I’m running the show now here. That is what Helen Zille had to do. If you cannot get along with each other and yous fighting with each other, then somebody else must come from the outside and come in and pull all the people together, have meetings with them, sort out what we want for this market. Then you wouldn’t’ve had all this havoc. Because then City would’ve known that they must include all the stakeholders of the buildings, they would have known that there’s gonna be lines there by the library. But at the moment now Laura, this whole process is in shambles” (Trader 5 Interview).

Traders that were interviewed varied greatly on the targets of their anger, many reacting at one another or just broadly at the Umbrella Body structure. Some addressed that it was time the city take responsibility for the conflict as a whole. There were instances when the city refused to address trader concerns from CHATA if they were not put forward through the Umbrella Body structure:
“The city also claimed that the trader umbrella body must be consulted by CHATA with any further questions about the process...CHATA feels that this is a poor and lame excuse. The city wants Traders to hear from other Traders the issues that the city has imposed. This makes the city not liable for the rules and unconstitutional provisions that they have put in place in order to further their own agenda and control the Traders” (CHATA press release, 11 September 2009).

In press releases and conversation, CHATA saw this as the use of the tactic of divide and rule. In this view, the city was pulling strength out of the struggle by disrupting and weakening the collective action.

“Still to this date the City has not called a meeting with all Traders invited and they are continuing to work with an undemocratic umbrella body of Traders as their way of [communicating] information about the process. By the way in which the city is reacting to the situations and objections of the Traders, it is obvious they are embarking on a divide and rule tactic” (CHATA press release, 9 December 2009).

The tactic of divide and rule is a historical one in South Africa, reminiscent of apartheid days. In a situation where many will be negatively affected by the implementation of a new system of either laws or policies, it is in the benefit of the authority to disrupt any unification that may form in protest.

3.2.4 Trader Relationships with Surrounding Community and Customers

In Mitchells Plain “About 48% of households live below the poverty line; however, the average monthly income of the node is only slightly lower than the national average...The population of Mitchell’s Plain is poor; many people are unemployed or economically inactive; and most people earn less than the household subsistence level” (DPLG, n.d., pp.5,14). MPTCM traders depend on the business from the surrounding community and the surrounding community depends on the low-prices that the traders offer. “...I’m doing well in the trade because I am in the Town Centre where all the people is that needs this for their houses and cheap prices...” (Trader 9 Interview). Although trading does provide a means to an income, some traders additionally noted that operating a business in MPTCM allows them to give back to their community.
“...I myself, at the end of the day I just want to, I just want to trade. I just want to give back what the people needs by the end of the day. And it’s just not about trading, it’s about what you can give to the people. Especially to the poor people as well. Because by the end of the day, I got a few potatoes over, I can give it to someone else” (Trader 2 Interview).

This however, adds to the expansive effect of the evictions and the removal of many traders. “It’s only not the Hawkers they are hurting, it’s the communities at large” (Trader 9 Interview).

Beyond offering goods at low prices for those operating on a subsistent income, traders also must offer quality products to retain customers.

“If I am gonna sell that box of apples and the customer leaves and it’s all rotten at the bottom, will he come back? No. So I gotta see that that’s a decent box he gets so that he can come back again. I got to get, we got to get the best of goods to keep our customers. And your personality, you understand, and your conversations you have with them. That’s all things you must do so you can get them to you to buy your fruit” (CT Market 1 Interview).

For traders to retain business, price and consistent deliverance of a quality product build a customer base and promote lasting relationships. No matter if you fall into an informal or formal business classification, the essential business elements and standards remain the same. As one trader simply put it, “Because if you don’t treat your customers with respect, how do you expect to sell your goods?” (CT Market 1 Interview). This further allows traders to form relationships with their customers based on loyalty. A consistent customer base guarantees daily income.

“...I build a big relationship with my customers, whether they young, whether they elderly. And I’m always there for the community, whatever they need I’m always there, I will never say no. And I’m dealing here with the medical centre’s people, I’m dealing with the court’s people, I’m dealing with a lot of doctor’s here too always buying their fruit here” (Trader 7 Interview).

This trader in particular has regular customers coming to her stand from the moment she begins setup to the time the market closes. Her income depends on these relationships and they often extend beyond the purchasing of fruit, now having grown into friendships that are in-turn part of an embedded sense of community.
3. 3 Trading Conditions and Desired Improvements

Trading conditions in MPTCM highlight the vulnerability and insecurity that informal businesses face daily. Weather and features of trading bays are the most pressing conditions that traders spoke about during interviews.

3.3.1 Weather

Weather is a significant factor, both for the ability of traders to operate and the willingness of customers to shop. Different areas of the market are more susceptible to harsher weather conditions than others. Due to the number of narrow lanes jetting from central squares, many lanes act as wind tunnels. One trader has addressed her concerns regarding this effect: “...the wind is taking over...it’s not nice to trade here because it’s so cold and windy. Like if it winds a lot and rains a lot, we can’t trade, we must pack up, we can’t open up for the day” (Trader 5 Interview). Cape Town experiences cold and rainy winters that are inconsistent, thus adding to inconsistencies in customer frequencies and trader working days. The summer sun and heat is also problematic for traders, especially those with perishable goods that are exposed for full days at a time. Due to the weather, trader business success becomes more susceptible to outside forces. Many have attempted to curb these factors by also creating coverings for their bays, but due to past and current by-laws, this is deemed illegal and warrants a fine. Some traders have set their stands under concrete awnings built for the shops in order to avoid negative repercussions of weather.

3.3.2 Trading Bays

Trading bays in MPTCM vary, all with unique setups. Each stand must consider its placement, product and customer. Stands that are situated under awnings built for formal businesses need not worry about constructing cover. On the other hand, stands that are exposed and without cover usually have self-built canopies to shade from weather conditions.
Stands are also organised based on the products sold. Cigarette sellers, for example, may have a space where they stand and a constructed counter with a smaller area behind to display the brands available for sale. Clothing traders usually have stands with poles from which to hang clothes for display. Fruit and veg traders typically have large stands and a small area for traders to sit so that their bay looks full of fresh produce and allows the customer to personally choose the product.

Additionally, traders arrange their stands in the spaces where they trade based on foot traffic. Tables and stands are organised for the customer’s convenience. Most traders also have constructed a space at their stand where they can sit or stand themselves. Some traders additionally offer a space for friends or customers to sit and converse. One trader in an interview highlighted the importance of this feature to building relationships with customers. However, this element would be jeopardised by the upgrade due to the decrease in trading bay size that would not allow enough space for an extra chair.

In general, covering for stands, the size of bays and storage were the three most important factors mentioned regarding trading spaces.
3.3.2.1 Covering for Trading Bays

As mentioned earlier, many traders either stand in lanes under built structures or have constructed their own covering for their stands, however many traders still do not have covering at all. Covering allows traders to avoid harsh weather conditions, creates an inviting space for customers and provides a space for traders to work. Previously, self-constructed tents or canopies have been deemed illegal and a request to take them down is given with a fine. One trader whose structure was removed by law enforcement was issued a R10 000 fine: “...then they removed my structure and they billed me R10 000, the City...for removing my structure...and then I fought them and eventually they squashed it after some time of angry business” (Trader 3 Interview). According to the new permit system requirements following suit with the By-laws, traders are only allowed to use umbrellas as a means of cover for their stands: “Save as otherwise authorized in writing by the Municipality of Cape Town, no structures, other than a device which operates in the same manner as, and is shaped like an umbrella, for the purpose of providing shelter, shall be used” (Municipality of CT, 2009:2(#12)). This requirement, although, is not supported by all, as some argue it does not take into account the conditions in MPTCM or the businesses that traders run.

“They must give us proper canopies where we can stand under, where maybe your clients can come in and have a decent space to stand while you busy talking to them and maybe assist your clients, whatever the case may be. If it rains, your client can come nearer to you under the canopy, you know. Having an umbrella up over you, what is an umbrella gonna do? What is an umbrella gonna serve in the wind? Like for instance, the wind we had yesterday here. What is an umbrella gonna serve in the wind? You can’t hardly walk with an umbrella in rain” (Trader 1 Interview).

As this trader noted, these umbrellas do not allow for customer cover and barely cover products, the table and trader.
3.3.2.2 Size of Trading Bays

Prior to the enforcement of the new permit system, allocated trading bays changed in size and placement numerous times over the last ten years in MPTCM. Anyone will notice this based on the numerous fading yellow lines on the ground from previous demarcation efforts.

Throughout the city of Cape Town in managed trading areas, informal traders are given spaces marked with yellow road paint within which they are designated to trade. Sizes of these spaces vary depending on the market or the types of goods sold. Most generally, bays are 2X2, 3X1 or 4X2 (in metres). Independently Traders in MPTCM have set up their own bays ranging in size from 2X2 to 10X10. However, with the recent enforcement of the permit system, all bays in the new domed market and surrounding trading areas are 2X2 metres in size.

When questioned about how the sizes of trading spaces are determined, the city official interviewed replied as follows:

“It's first of all, what's your available spaces, what are your maximum number of traders in the area, allow for a little bit of expansion and then it's simple maths – it's, it's dividing that into space available and that's how you got the bays allocated...So normally a trading bay in traditional areas like, you know your traditional 2X1, it's a door size. And that's from the base that's a table, a traditional table. So that's your, your standard space. But in

Figure 11: Demarcation lines on the ground at MPTCM. Black lines indicate bay markings either initially painted in the wrong areas or in locations that were later moved. Yellow lines indicate present trading bays.- Photo by author
some areas it goes to 2X2, 3X2, St. George’s Mall I think there’s even a 4X4, but in the Mitchells Plain context it was literally a case of how much available space do you have, what are your, your fire regulations, what are your, you, you numbers of pedestrians that walk through an area. Because if you have, you know 70,000 people walking through on a day, you can’t create a narrow, congested walkway, you need to have wider walkways. So that’s, that’s just how Mitchells Plain space was allocated” (CT Official Interview).

However, a 2X2 bay in the new market area in MPTCM leaves traders with only enough room for a small table and one chair.

Below are photographs of the new market area and the space that was allocated for traders and customers.

Figure 12: Newly constructed MPTCM - Photo by author
What these photographs display and what traders have communicated is that the quality of business is jeopardized by the size of the spaces that the government sees sufficient through mere mathematical equations. Traders even with small products, such as spices, will even have difficulty in a 2X2 space, let alone those running a fruit and veg stand with product that fills the back of a bakkie at the beginning of the day.
In the logic process presented by this city official, trader business success never once was a concern in bay size allocation.

Members of the 5th Avenue Traders Association are having a difficult time overcoming this issue as many of the car mechanic businesses require a lot more land than, for instance, fruit and veg stands.

“So what we did is we put in a proposal for the additional piece of land on that side to have it given to us as a lease and we will do our own manage, management and stuff like that. And the City came back and they told us they’ll give us the land but not on a lease. They’ll give us additional bays. And then they’ll mark, make bigger bays, but not the bays, not the size that is currently doing, having now. So at the end of the day that big stalls is going to lose businesses. The people that’s working for them they’ll have to cut down on staff that they employ. And how can they, what is, what is going to happen to the, to those people that they employ? They also got families to support. And how can they put those big stall that’s up. One stall is up to 20 metres. How that, that stall can’t even go in the 8X4 metre stall because that is what they suggested for us. The biggest they’ll go is 8X4. What about the people’s vehicles? Because that’s why they couldn’t take bays here because their vehicles then couldn’t come” (Trader 10 Interview).

These traders are willing to manage the space themselves and have presented the city with a clear proposal for how this would be done. However, these endeavours were not accepted. In addition, according to the interviewed representative from this organisation, nobody from the city who was working to determine the size of trading bays ever came to the area to assess the situation and the space traders require for a successful business.

3.3.2.3 Storage

Traders require storage for their goods; however most do not have access to it. Most traders spoken to use tables and boxes from their stands to store goods overnight by packing tightly all stand products closely in one space. Most traders, with large quantities of stock like fruit and veg, do not have the space to store their goods at home or elsewhere. “There’s no storage for fruit and veg traders. How must they cart it up, up and down every, some of them hasn’t got, um vehicles” (Trader 3 Interview). Speaking to this issue from research conducted throughout South Africa, Lund and Skinner write, “storage is a central concern for traders. Not having storage
facilities often leads traders to sleep at their trading sites – a situation in which women are particularly vulnerable” (1999, p.37). Although this was not revealed as the case for any traders interviewed, some use the services of people who do sleep in the centre overnight. Some people who sleep in MPTCM have found a living acting as security guards for traders overnight.

Most traders spoken to about storage were under the impression that it would be provided in the market upgrade. Unfortunately the impressions that new facilities would be constructed never materialised, and traders continue to struggle to acquire storage space. Some traders thought that kiosks built surrounding the new domed market would be used for storage purposes. However, in reality these kiosks are not storage, but instead have been allocated to a handful of traders as areas to run their businesses, setup like small covered shops. There were feelings of frustration expressed surrounding this topic. Some traders interviewed noted that these kiosks were not made available to all traders, but instead were preferentially given to a few.

3.3.3 Traders’ Desired Improvements of MPTCM

These conditions highlighted by traders are ones to which they have grown accustomed. There was a general sense amongst all traders interviewed and those spoken to in conversation that they are not entirely opposed to the renovation process. Traders do want a renovated market they are proud of that welcomes customers and is a clean space to run businesses.

“...there are only four toilets per side, meaning four toilets for the woman and four toilets for the men. Imagine 10,000 people or 5,000 people is moving up and down in the Town Centre and that is what they give to us people here. If you look to the future, then they had to plan better to make the Centre presentable for all the people, not only for the Hawkers” (Trader 9 Interview).

However, traders do not want these improvements at the expense of livelihoods. Improvement of conditions on its own, according to traders, should be dealt with in a way that encourages a safer, cleaner and more lucrative market environment.
“We would like structure here, we want structures that is all the same...Make it a beautiful little market. Make it not for one, Laura, but for each and every person. Make it comfortably for the person, don’t oppress the person, don’t give him a space where he is going to lose money...I’m, we not scared of change. We would love the change. What person that works wouldn’t want his shop or his market to be beautiful and comfortable…” (Trader 5 Interview).

In interviews I asked traders to offer their own suggestions for market improvement. The overwhelming proposal for improvement was covering provided for stands and goods. “…Canopies...Where these people is being, I won’t say protected, but most of our stuff. Some of our people is trading with perishable stuff, you know? Especially for fruit and veg. To be under...from the sun and from the rain, you know, have canopies” (Trader 1 Interview). Essentially traders are concerned with the market conditions and are eager for improvements that will be beneficial to business.

3.4 Objection Process: Workshop and Tribunal

Throughout the progression of the market upgrade that would see the eviction of traders, a process of objecting was instated. The City of Cape Town’s Informal Trading By-Law legislatively backed the market upgrade. All by-laws have a process that must be followed before they are published and subsequently used as tools for legal oversight. This process creates a time period for the public to respond to the proposed by-law and also object by means of written letters, which are then reviewed and considered. All traders I spoke to, in interviews or casual conversation did not support the Informal Trading By-Law, which will be outlined in section 3.5.2.2. Due to the continued opposition by many traders to the market upgrade, new means of objection were created before the evictions took place. These new methods, although, were not seen by all traders as sufficient spaces for consultation and collaboration about the looming evictions.

By-laws are publicised via radio broadcast and printed newspapers. Traders noted that the main means of public access to the by-law was as a draft version in the back of a newspaper. However, publishing the by-law was voiced as a concern
by traders. This method of reading the published by-law and sending a written objection takes for granted people’s literacy levels. No traders spoken to were themselves illiterate, but they were pointing to a larger problem and assumption regarding public understanding and objection to by-laws.

As an organisation opposing the eviction, CHATA objected to the process using various methods: written objections, protest (marches and meetings) and raising the issue with political figures. At this point in the objection process, CHATA was associated with and supported by WCITC. The coalition provided depth in solidarity and an exposure to other traders throughout the province also being affected by the implementation of the new by-law and resisting eviction. The city official noted the objection tactics of CHATA. He spoke about them as if they were annoyances to the agenda of the city and noted that they were only spearheaded by a “small group of traders”:

“They've been using every bit of legislation, administrative processes to frustrate and delay the implementation of that Council decision. They, they tried to engage, apart from our Mayor at the time...the speaker of Council, which is the second most important and senior person. They tried to engage with the speaker, they tried to engage with City Manager, they tried to engage with Mayor Zille at the time, and those three people said ‘Sorry our has taken a decision that must be implemented.’ They then went to the, the Municipal Ombudsman again to, to challenge the city in terms of processes, in terms of legislation. At the end of that process the Ombudsman said ‘Look, the Council took the decision, it was a legal decision, there might be one or two concerns in terms of how officials are, are going to process to implement the decision, but at the end of the day the decision itself is competent, it’s legal’” (CT Official Interview).

In order to deal with the continued objections, the city organised a workshop and a tribunal to consult with traders. The workshop was organised by the city to address the concerns put forth by traders regarding the upgrade, evictions and permit system. “That is why when the Mayor said he’s gonna give a, a workshop and I thought when he said a workshop, I thought, okay it’s gonna and then he said it’s for our grievances so I said ok, that is also good, then we can actually speak in that meeting, in that workshop, What do we want out of this market” (Trader 5 Interview). CHATA members expected the workshop to be a place to address
concerns that would result in changes to the upgrade, however this is not how it unfolded in reality. A few days before the workshop commenced, the city announced that each association would only be able to have three representatives from associations present to voice concerns.

“...a representative from CHATA, attended the workshop and has responded that: (1) The Mayor was only there for 10 minutes. (2) CHATA highlighted in the workshop that there has been a motion of “no confidence” put into this body on 8 May 2008 that has not been recognized or further investigated with sufficient action. (3) CHATA also raised the fact that the Umbrella Body has to be mindful about the decision to continue with the renovation and relocation process because the Traders’ livelihoods depend on it. There must be an acknowledgement that from the process taking place many people will not have jobs and income – a critical issue that should have been resolved in some fashion” (CHATA press release, 27 April 2010).

The tribunal, comprised of independent mediators, followed the workshop. This was meant to hear the remaining objections associated with the allocation of bays, an issue that the workshop left unresolved. Only one CHATA member spoken to, however, was asked to attend the tribunal. After the process, this trader still opposed the upgrade and was not satisfied with how the tribunal addressed her concerns. Once concluded, the tribunal board reassured for the city that the process was fair and legal.

Once the workshop and tribunal were completed, CHATA members and others were left disappointed and not supportive of the upgrade.

“CHATA...attended, but is concerned with the intention of the workshop as the process would have and is still continuing regardless. The City still wants to move forward with the process and announced that it must go on, but at this time has given two more weeks of postponement” (CHATA press release, 18 Nov 2009).

This calls into question the essence of the consultation process. "We are worried that the City is merely using the workshop to pretend that they are consulting with us. We have found this to be the case elsewhere with other traders" (CHATA press release, 26 Jan 2010). Many traders initially saw this space as a hopeful one that would allow them to voice their concerns to and be heard by people in authoritative and decision-making positions who were possibly questioning the impact of the
developments. However, as CHATA pointed out in the 26 January 2010 press release, that creating spaces to consult with people on the ground to meet a requirement is not truly bridging the gap between government and people.

3.5 The Eviction
“In taking my business away you’re taking away my life here” (Trader 9 Interview).

Apparent in exploring the current trading conditions and the looming evictions in MPTCM are the consistent levels of vulnerability and insecurity that traders face daily. Be it overcoming physical conditions of trading spaces or natural weather patterns that exacerbate these conditions, traders have learned how to deal with these situations. However, dealing with very real concerns that continually affect business can only be done for so long. Insecurity is characteristic of many definitions of informal employment, both to outside conditions and policy crackdown. “The issue of non-registration, of not complying with regulations, has been at the heart of the attacks on the sector, and separates it from the ‘safe’ formal sector, making it extremely vulnerable to state action” (Potts, 2008, p.163). These elements of informal employment came to a head for many traders on 8 March 2010 when the evictions in MPTCM commenced and the notions of insecurity and vulnerability became concretely evident.

3.5.1 Day of Evictions
On Monday 8 March 2010, forceful evictions of traders took place in MPTCM. Nearly 100 Law Enforcement and police were present working with one another to evict traders. Early in the morning trash trucks and police vans entered MPTCM to move traders who had constructed their stands in newly deemed restricted areas. Traders offering support and those being evicted were present, as well as supporters, media and city officials – about 200 people total besides Law Enforcement and police. Additionally, two officials from the city were present who had been the main liaisons from the city to the traders on the renovation plan. The market was otherwise abandoned with few customers in sight. Traders whose
stands were located in lanes that were to be cleared based on violation of the new Informal Trading By-law were evicted.

Close to one week prior to the eviction, those traders who were included in the renovation process collected their permits, which assigned them new trading spaces. All traders were aware that if they had not been provided with a new space to trade and constructed their stands regardless, they would be evicted. On the eviction morning close to 10 CHATA traders fully constructed their stands as usual in Symphony Lane. Law Enforcement officers evicting these traders moved planks, boxes and tables from each stand and deposited them in trash trucks. A crane then lifted final large pieces from stands.
Figure 16: Demolition and confiscation of stands on eviction day - Photo by author

Figure 17: Continued demolition and confiscation of stands on eviction day - Photo by author
Some stands were not fully set up with goods, but were still constructed with tables and coverings that were also removed. Once Law Enforcement officers reached the next stand to be demolished, the trader whose bay it was would stand in protest in the middle and resist as much as possible. It was a heavily emotional day and these particular moments of resistance were met with chanting, screaming, cursing and tears. At some moments, Law Enforcement officers did physically remove traders from their bays in order to further the removal of goods.

The eviction began at the far end of Symphony Lane closest to the library. Once this square was cleared, Law Enforcement moved their trucks along through Symphony Lane towards Harmony square. The last area of the lane is much
narrower than where the eviction began. For this reason, the police found it necessary to block off the entire lane with a police line of 12 wide in order to prohibit people from accessing the area.

Figure 20: Police line formed to block off narrower end of Symphony Lane leading to Harmony Square - Photo by author

Figure 21: Broader view of police line formed to block off narrower end of Symphony Lane leading to Harmony Square - Photo by author
People instead circled MPTCM in order to be present for the evictions from the Harmony Square end. The stands that were to be removed next were four stands that sat in front of the Shoprite entrance next to Harmony Square.

Two police bakkies moved into the narrower end of Symphony Lane, but crane trucks were too big for this area. The final evictions in front of Shoprite were four stands of historical fruit and veg traders. The Shoprite across from these stands closed its metal gates during this time. The area outside these gates was very crowded and difficult to navigate freely.

Three of the fruit and veg stands outside Shoprite were set up for the day with boxes upon boxes of produce that were eventually confiscated. Police bakkies were parked in front of the stands with the back doors of the vehicles opened. About 15 Law Enforcement officers put on rubber gloves and removed all the food from the stands and put it in the back of the police trucks. No food was thrown into the vehicles, but instead placed bag-by-bag or piece-by-piece into carrier boxes and loaded. At one point, a moment I interpreted as an act of protest, the trader running one of the stands reloaded boxes of tomatoes into cleared areas in his stand. These
tomatoes, which were confiscated by law enforcement, were initially behind the stand on a trolley and were extra inventory for the day.

Figure 23: Confiscation of trader goods by Law Enforcement - Photo by author

Figure 24: Confiscation of trader goods by Law Enforcement with crowds watching - Photo by author

The confiscation of traders’ goods during an eviction is a controversial legal issue that needs to be questioned, as it is a defining feature of evictions throughout
the country. A worker at CTM spoke directly to this issue in his interview, coding the confiscation as theft:

“I don’t think it’s legal, my personal opinion. I’m not a legal person, but what I do understand is people’s rights. And in my opinion, the only time that somebody can take somebody’s goods, and I want this to be tested in court, is when they receive a court order...Because what it amounts to me, it amounts to theft. I would have, I would have instituted that action, I would have taken up a case against the city through SAPS and say to SAPS, look here, they stole my goods, and charge them with theft...You see as far as I’m concerned if there’s any dispute you need a dispute mechanism in place. They don’t have that. You need to go through an appeals committee, you need to go through a court, you need to go through all this discipline, they didn’t do that. Not one of those traders there were allowed to represent themselves to any appeals committee, to any representations, so what does that say? I don’t feel they have the right to confiscate their goods” (CT Market 3 Interview).

In Skinner’s work regarding local government policy and the reality of street trading, she points to an apparent gap between the confiscation of goods by police and the impact this act has on traders:

“For example, the area manager responsible for Cape Town CBD, in describing the removal of a group of traders who were selling crisps and cool drinks at the Cape Town taxi rank, said he could not understand why traders ran away leaving their goods behind. He explained that if they allowed the enforcement officers to take their details, they could come and claim their goods, once they paid a R200 fine (interview, 31, Aug. 1998). Interviews were conducted with these very same traders the next day (1 Sept. 1998): the average value of their goods at the beginning of the day was R50” (2000, p.58).

The fourth stand to be evicted across from Shoprite was not set up with goods, but was only the skeleton of a constructed canopy made with metal posts and tarps, with multiple wooden display boxes in the centre. The female co-chairperson of CHATA and her husband ran their business in this space. Due to this stand being an organising point for CHATA, a lot of tension arose from its deconstruction. A police line was formed through the stand during the eviction. Following the deconstruction of this stand, only two more traders with smaller stands were evicted in front of the crowds. Once the evictions were then over, all the police trucks left MPTCM and Law Enforcement and police began to disperse. CHATA
traders, visibly exhausted, gathered and sat together organising a meeting for the afternoon.

![Police line formed through CHATA co-chairperson's stand before deconstruction and eviction of stand - Photo by author](image)

About three hours after the evictions, a CHATA meeting occurred in the public library of MPTCM. With about 60 traders present, this was the most attended CHATA meeting for which I was present. People were tired, angry and sad. The female co-chairperson of CHATA was not in attendance for the meeting or the eviction morning, so the male co-chairperson headed the meeting. He spoke with patience and emotion dealing with each concern raised and speaking words of encouragement about the days to follow. Traders spoke with confusion regarding the legality of the evictions, especially the fines issued. CHATA members were under the impression that fines would only be issued days following evictions if the new by-law was violated, but not on eviction day. The chairperson addressed the wide concern of whether or not traders should go back to trading in old spaces. He encouraged this action of protest and there was a consensus to the idea that if traders wanted to return to trading then they should do so. Traders who spoke talked about their concern for the loss of income and widely expressed the anxiety they had for how they would feed their families from this point forward. CHATA
members encouraged each other to stand collectively in protest the following morning with placards. There was mention of rumours that were claiming CHATA’s membership at only 25 people. Traders at the meeting noted that there must be a protest to disprove these rumours and show that not just a handful of people were negatively affected by the eviction. Additionally, it was apparent that legal initiatives were underway with members of CHATA not present that day. Traders spoke briefly about these efforts and were positive that news would come the following day as to whether or not a legal battle would continue. Details of this battle were not offered to me as general knowledge or spoken about in detail at the meeting. The meeting was a space of support for traders who were looking for answers regarding how to move forward. The co-chairperson noted that the use of non-violence over the course of the day was admirable and showed the character of the traders well. He told all attendees that the community was behind them and supported their efforts.

3.5.2 Legislative Reasoning of Evictions

3.5.2.1 MPTCM Business Plan

“Trader 1: Because once the workman, they’re working what’s her name plan is going through. You know, then this place is gonna be privatized. Then obviously the guy with the head lease, he will definitely put up rent.

Interviewer: Who, do you know who’s going to be, when you say it’s gonna be privatized, who’s gonna be owning it, do you know?

Trader 1: Kenny Brinkhuis

Interviewer: Kenny Brinkhuis? And is, what company is he associated with?

Trader 1: Well Kenny Brinkhuis is not actually a informal trader, okay? He has couple of shops in the Mitchells Plain area, I don’t know all the Mitchells Plain, but he do have two shops where he’s making lots of frames, mirrors and all this glass, what’s her name there. So he’s not even an informal trader in the Town Centre.

Interviewer: So he will own the Town Centre?

Trader 1: He will, that’s right.

Interviewer: How long, when did they say he’ll own it by? Or does he own it now?

Trader 1: No, not yet, because his business plan must still go through. And his business plan will go through after this permit system is all settled...” (Trader 1 Interview).
Three and a half months prior to the evictions in MPTCM, the City’s policies regarding informal trading were updated. The City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-law was enacted in November 2009 and used as the primary tool to legally justify the evictions. The updated by-laws were sporadically enforced and implemented throughout the city. In MPTCM the by-law was used as a means to evict traders. This made room for a business plan to be implemented that is met by privatised development of the market into a CDB for Mitchells Plain. Traders who spoke about this plan in their interviews saw the evictions as a direct result of the implementation of this plan, which requires whole areas of the market to be cleared for further development and construction. The improvement of current trading areas was needed for traders, neighbouring bigger businesses and customers. However, the complete removal of informal businesses in MPTCM is seen by many traders as solely justified only to further the interests of development from which they will not benefit.

“So if it looks good to them, then obviously in, say a couple of years, they gonna privatize everything like they are doing currently. And then we are gonna lose out, it’s not gonna be for, for the, the benefit of the Traders for the benefit of the City...They are not gonna upgrade for us. And not in this areas. So they have got an ulterior motive. Capitalism must go on...Capitalism, I mean this is all for Capitalism, alright?” (Trader 3 Interview).

3.5.2.2 Informal Trading By-Law: Tool For Evictions

The creation of the informal trading policy initiated by the City of Cape Town in 2001 became a model for cities throughout the country (CT Official Interview). This policy was approved in 2004, however ground level implementation did not follow. According to the Cape Town official interviewed: “…we always believe that, that municipalities and officials are very good at formulating policy documents, but then where there’s the big gap is the implementation of policy” (CT Official Interview). In order to apply the policy changes, the City of Cape Town Informal Trading By-law of 2009 was written. This by-law compiled legal and business frameworks and addressed the governance of the informal economy. “So the idea is that the policy has now been translated into a by-law, which gives the, the city a legal responsibility on how it operates when it comes to the informal economy...sets
out very clearly the roles and responsibilities and obligations…” (CT Official Interview).

The policy framework that in turn became the by-law was initially created to deal with what government saw as a lack of regulation for informal trading. “Up until the late 1980s in South Africa it was very difficult to get a licence to trade. Street traders were consistently and often violently harassed. From the late 1980s onwards a relatively libertarian, free market approach dealt with the informal economy. This culminated in the 1991 Businesses Act” (Skinner, 2000, p.51). The Businesses Act of 1991 outlines the presence and acceptance of informal trading. However, according to the city official interviewed,

“the first thing that the act did, and I’m talking about the original act, was that it took away all by-laws or regulations that impacted on the informal economy. So where before you had a very regulated framework, you know how you could trade and how you couldn’t trade, and then 1991 with the signature all that disappeared. What people lost track of that in the act, they put down your…basic parameters on how one should trade and one tends to [lose] track of that. And the effect was that in 1991, 92, we had a very much free-for-all situation” (CT Official Interview).

He continued to explain how the situation in the Cape Town CBD became uncontrollable with too many informal businesses claiming a right to trade based on the act. The problems arose when building owners in the CBD forced the city into an ultimatum. They began requiring the management and regulation of informal businesses, threatening the termination of leases if action was not taken, which created a financial liability for the city.

“So the City of Cape Town together with the City of Johannesburg at the time and Durban and a number of other major cities had discussions with National Government and then the Businesses Act was amended...And effectively what that amendment allows is that if, if it’s considered that in a particular area there’s a need to manage, or restrict, or control, or prohibit trading, you can do it, but there’s a process to go through” (CT Official Interview).

The Act was amended in 1993, making way for the regulation of street trading through by-law creation for years to come:

“This Act allows local authorities to formulate street trading by-laws outlining what they would and would not allow in their municipality, and to declare restricted and prohibited trade zones, In effect, the amendments in
this Act have given local authorities much greater autonomy over how they manage street trading, and different local authorities have adopted different approaches” (Skinner 2000 cited in Skinner 2008, p.232).

In Cape Town, the consultative procedure requires the municipality's initial approval to deem an area one of restrictive trading. This is followed by all of Cape Town's 220 political councillors approving this decision in full. However, this full council decision is a requirement in Cape Town, which is counter to the country's general policy giving full decision approval to the Executive Mayor.

A process of clamping down on the vast emergence of informal businesses began for the whole of Cape Town with each area requiring its own level of detailed governance. However, for traders that were running businesses based on the 1991 Act, the amendment and sudden change came as a shock.

“...generally speaking informal traders didn't know how to react or respond to the City. So they would talk, but when the City said 'Look this is what we are going to do, we will follow process, but this is what we are gonna do,' they didn't quite know how to respond to it...we found the emergence of one or two lobby groups and...some of them were activists in trade unions...do they became very active in the informal sector. And those...activist groups helped very much with trying to, to make sure that the City applies the, the Businesses Act, that we did look at trading opportunities and it wasn’t the case of simply prohibiting trading” (CT Official Interview).

MPTCM is prime location for informal traders. This began to cause problems in the late 1990s when the population of traders rapidly increased, just as happened in Cape Town’s CBD. MPTCM then became a central area of concern for restrictive trading:

“...in December 2008, actually in March 2008, our Council took the decision to, to declare the MPTCM a restricted trading area and then within that restriction you trade only in the markets and the squares and not in the walkways. And then that decision was advertised in terms of the Businesses Act and then interesting enough, when it was advertised we received three letters of objection, one of them from a husband and wife couple, but so you know it was two separate letters and one from a, an individual trader...And our Council in December considered those objections and decided that we cannot ignore legislation such as our, I forget the proper word, for our fire regulations, we want to upgrade the Town Centre, we want to create opportunities for our people to visit the Town Centre, so notwithstanding those three objections to, to go ahead with the, the creating of trading areas
in, within the squares. And then flowing from that there was a small group of traders that trade in Symphony Lane” (CT Official Interview).

In order to further implement the by-law, a permit system was created. This system, which was implemented throughout Cape Town, mandates specific requirements for traders to follow and only allows traders who were granted permits the ability to trade.

3.5.2.2.1 Permit System

The permit system requirements set out a number of standards determining what is allowed in the daily running of informal businesses and who has access to permits. Traders addressed feeling constrained in being able to run profitable businesses due to some permit requirements. Features of the requirements are simply unattainable for many traders in MPTCM due to the lack of facilities. For example, one such system standard states: “Remove daily at the conclusion of trading all waste, packaging material, stock and equipment of whatsoever nature which are utilised in connection with your business” (Municipality of CT, 2009, p.3(#17)). Demanding the removal of all goods from trading areas at night requires access to storage facilities that, as raised earlier, are not available for all. Traders then become liable for the storage of their goods, although many do not have space in their homes.

Some of the permit standards seem unattainable or inconvenient for traders, and do not necessarily take their financial or physical situation into consideration. “Monthly payment of permit fees shall be made at the City of Cape Town Cash Office, as indicated accordingly for the different informal trading areas” (Municipality of CT, 2009, p.1(#10)). Traders expressed concerns about having to travel to Cape Town to pay rent monthly. One trader spoke to these worries:

“If your permit is not renewed by the 7th, then you must be out. Then they bring someone else into your trading bay. There is a lot of people that doesn’t agree with this...because of the month-to-month basis they are having to renew every month...here on this permit like they said here each permits gotta be renewed between the 1st and 7th of each month. Now that mean to say from the 1st and the 7th of each month you must have every month your
taxi fare to town, which is 20 rand and back. Your return is actually 20 rand for the taxi” (Trader 1 Interview).

Some traders expressed fear associated with this requirement as being an impediment on the flexibility and independence that is intrinsic to running an informal business.

Other system requirements dictate who is able to obtain a permit in the first place. For example, requirement number 20 calls for the following screening:

“This permit is issued on the basis that the applicant certifies that he/she is not an unsuitable person to carry on lawful business at the allocated site, whether by reason of his/her character, having regard to any conviction recorded against him/her, his/her previous conduct or for any reason. In the event that the Municipality receives credible information on affidavit that such undertaking is false, it reserves the right to cancel any permit issues, without compensation being paid” (Municipality of CT, 2009, p.3(#20)).

This requirement is one that mirrors a clause in the informal trading by-law and was raised as problematic on at least two interview occasions. A CTM businessman spoke about this issue:

“...my personal opinion, and this is my own and not the market, is that I feel that there’s certain clauses in there that infringes on the basic human rights of, of many traders, you know. And I feel that some, even a particular clause that I felt was, was really bad was the one where a person’s criminal record was brought into question when, when applying for a permit.
Interviewer: And judgment of character.
CT Market 3: Yes. In this day and age, who becomes the judge? And who judges them? It becomes subjective. There will be no objectivity in that because he can decide tomorrow to give to anybody a permit and say I thought somebody’s character was okay. So I felt very strongly about that. And secondly it’s that I don’t like the unilateral approach that they have and you know they’re not concerned about people’s livelihoods. To them it’s more about aesthetics than, than livelihood” (CT Market 3 Interview).

For those traders in MPTCM not evicted and in the new market, the employment opportunities they are able to create for others are now also limited by the permit system. The system prohibits the employment of additional persons in
the market without prior consent from the city and then even only when the permit holder is not present:

“The holder of the Permit shall personally operate and be present at the site during trading hours. A person may assist the Permit Holder at the site in his/her absence, and the requisite identification of the respective assistant must be advised to the City of Cape Town and be reflected in a letter of authority in possession of the assistant” (Municipality of CT, 2009, p.1(#1)).

Therefore even traders that remain still are bound to terminating the jobs of additional workers that are not registered to their business. These livelihoods then must also be recognized and considered when speaking about those lost from the implementation of such a system.

An additional permit requirement was influential in June and July of 2010 for the FIFA World Cup. This legally covered the city for the changes that were made to informal markets throughout the country for the event. “The Municipality of Cape Town shall have the right to order the holder of the permit to temporarily cease trading from the hawking site in the event of it having to accommodate street parades/events of a similar nature or any road works without any compensation” (Municipality of CT, 2009, p.1(#4)). The World Cup was a countrywide event leaving all traders susceptible to being asked to either cease trading for the month or move to a new area. However, the repercussions of this requirement continue to affect traders, even after the World Cup. “And they say listen here you must move out because they gonna repair this place. So you now must go stay at home for a month? Or two or three months? They don’t care. They not gonna even give you money for a loaf of bread” (Trader 7 Interview).

For many, the lack of choice in agreeing to the implementation of the permit system has been a defining feature present in the process. “No we don’t want the permit system, but we didn’t have a choice. Our smallest stalls signed for the permit system because they didn’t want law enforcement to come and remove them if they don’t have a permit” (Trader 10 Interview). Traders expressed they have no other alternative than to appeal to a system that in the end they do not support.
3.5.3 The Meaning of Eviction: Traders’ Concerns

“Interviewer: Did they ever evict you completely? Take your stuff away?
Trader 3: No, you pack it up quickly before they come. But law enforcement came in quite a number of times and then I, then I moved and I moved here. So they didn’t, didn’t want us standing here, then I moved there, then they moved me there, then I moved back here again, cause they cleaned the house every time out. And um, when they would move me I tell them like you know, I built up my clientele, you’re not gonna give me a piece of bread, you’re not getting a salary at the end of the month, so I’m trying to earn my living and I’m just gonna stand here. So while I stood up against a lot of law enforcement officers already, I’ve had my fair share already” (Trader 3 Interview).

Traders in MPTCM have faced the threat of eviction before, but the enforcement on 8 March 2010 came with a complete restructuring. The construction of the new market area organised by the permit system has changed MPTCM entirely. Prior to the eviction, its effects concerned traders as many would not have another source of income for which to sustain themselves or their families.

“Work is gonna be very poor. Some people don’t know where traders are and some traders gonna lose a lot of money. Okay, Council think there is money, there isn’t money like they think there is. But, like I said, money wise, it’s gonna be like it’s gonna be very poor. They take, they actually taking the people’s bread outta their mouth. That’s what they’re gonna do” (Trader 2 Interview).

The consequence of being without a trading space left many concerned about their income alternatives.

“If they take me out here, I’ve got a lot of responsibility, I’m supporting my wife, I’m supporting my family. I’ve got lot of things for my, especially my, my family. And I pay rent, I’m eating here, I’m eating here, I’m doing my everything for, for this business I’m doing. So when they are taking me out it’s like that, they are sending me to do, I don’t know if they want me to, they are expecting me to do what? They want me to be a criminal? To rob the people out? So I am eating here, I am not robbing” (Trader 8 Interview).

As this trader points out, many traders are worried about where their next meal will come from: “But the thing is this is that if this is taken away from me, what’s happening? Who’s gonna provide for me? Council?” (Trader 2 Interview). Up until the eviction period, traders have independently created a means to feed their families. The effects of the evictions are deep seeded in survival-oriented
livelihoods. Thus, the concerns of most CHATA traders rested on the fact that after the eviction they would have no alternative space to continue their business, posing a threat to their livelihood.

“And with the economy now and with the recession, your business doesn’t increase, it’s gonna take a slump. And it’s gonna take time to rebuild again. Which is not on with [me], I mean everything happening now, what’s going up, rent is going up, electricity is going up, how am I supposed to feed my children?” (Trader 3 Interview).

A primary motivation for the existence of and continued fight for informal businesses is to meet basic needs.

“Life is very difficult and I mean it’s not becoming easier at all. You know the recession happening, nothing is easier. And government isn’t making anything easier, I mean with the increase in electricity going up so much, 45% for every year...And nothing is coming down even, I mean, food stuff, groceries, nothing is coming down, everything is going up. So they’re not seeing to the poor. And this is, I mean this, I don’t see why they should upgrade this so much. Because, this is a sub-economical area. And if you look at Mitchells Plain, they, it’s not a lot of affluent people here. It’s very, it’s I would say, it’s like the poorest of the poor...This isn’t a affluent area...Here the people survive. You know? It’s survivalist here. And you’re not even making major profits here...” (Trader 3 Interview).

In a press release two weeks before the evictions, CHATA boldly voiced the potential effects the eviction would have for traders:

“...if the so-called ‘trading plan’ is followed through, 500 people will have had their main source of income destroyed. This will have an additional negative impact on the 3,000 family members of the traders who rely on that income and also result in job losses for countless other informal workers such as porters, night-time security guards, drivers, etc. The total negative economic impact of this draconian restructuring of Town Centre on poor residents of Mitchell’s Plain is enormous. It will even result in higher prices for consumers. Only formal businesses like Shoprite and Pick n’ Pay stand to benefit” (CHATA press release 28 Feb 2010).
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION: COMPLEXITY OF TRADER LIVELIHOODS

There are three main issues for discussion that dig deeper into an understanding of the complexities of trader livelihoods:

- Informal trading as a method of challenging the alienation of work under capitalism;
- Expressions of resistance by traders aimed at protecting livelihoods;
- ‘Adverse incorporation’ as an analytical concept to understanding the placement of informal traders in a system that both includes and excludes them.

4.1 Traders and Alienation

“...I become a hawker to sell things. And that is my living for all these years. You see, to become a Hawker and to see things like to get any day money, food on my table. That is why I still here in the Town Centre because this living is good for me because I see what I'm doing” (Trader 4 Interview).

During this interview, a new element of being an informal trader emerged. This trader worked as a fish seller in Symphony Lane and was evicted in March 2010. While growing up he worked here with his father and took over the stand once he passed away. Deriving from this history he raised the notion of being intimately tied to the business and treasuring the ability to see the full extent and consequences of the work he does daily. This type of work for him was a choice and has allowed him to break free from restraints, which he feels he would have had as a worker in another situation. This trader’s fish stand requires engagement of specialised skill as he not only sells, but also cleans, guts and cuts the fish based on the customer’s desires. Being part of each of these steps is a feature unique to his work and would not be the case if he worked in a factory, for instance.

“Why I become a trader, you see. For me, I don’t want to work for somebody else or maybe in factories or something like that. Because when you are working there, you are committed to that people. Then when you are committed to that people, you must do everything that people are telling you, you see. But when I am on my own, you see, the things I do and the things I
see around me, I will speak about that, then I will do what is better and what is necessary for me to survive” (Trader 4 Interview).

Here he notes seeing the informal sector as a place for him to be self-sufficient without working under someone. Trading can be a space that allows people to overcome alternative work conditions. This trader’s work provides him with his daily needs and grants him independence in his working environment.

Marx’s theories of alienation claim “Alienation results from a certain form of organisation in society...only under the specific and economic and social circumstances of a market economy...” (Mandel, 1970, p.4). Marx has been widely critical of a capitalist society as being a breeding ground for alienation and alienated labour. However, as pointed out by Mandel, Marx’s criticism is a “transitory historical notion” in which we can imagine and live lives free of alienation (Mandel 1970, p.4). Capitalist expansion created a labour market that made human labour a commodity that was met with worker alienation. According to Marx, there are four conditions of alienated labour that have historically arisen from a market driven society:

“...the first precondition for the alienation of labour occurs when labour becomes separated from the basic means of production and subsistence...The second stage...came about when part of society was driven off the land, no longer had access to the means of production and means of subsistence, and, in order to survive, was forced to sell its labour power on the market...third form...sold his labour power for a certain part of his life to his employer, the products of his labour are not his own. The products of his labour become the property of the employer...final form...work is no longer a means of self-expression for anybody who sells his labour time. Work is just a means to attain a goal. And that goal is to get money...” (Mandel, 1970, pp.7-10).

In early stages of capitalist expansion, mainly classified by colonisation, stripping people from their land forced them to rely on others to survive. And thus, through the evolution of a market economy model, monetary gain through labour work became the main means for people to subsist and meet daily needs.

Marx’s theory of alienation acknowledges that within capitalism, the social and economic are inevitably connected. This, in turn, creates a problematic effect where personal relations become largely dependent on economic forces.
consumer market dominated by things that have become “needs,” the next stage for Marx is the stage of “reification” in which there is a “…transformation of social relations into things, into objects…” that “…results from a certain type of human relation rooted in commodity production and its extreme division of labour…” (Mandel, 1970, p.14). This can be seen in nearly all business relations today, including informal businesses.

Regardless of some binds of alienation that may be overcome as presented by the fish seller, some features of informal work, which are key elements of capitalism, can still be analysed as contributing to a seemingly inescapable sense of lived alienation. Traders are not at the direct whim of an employer or work for an industry that strips them from the products and creativity of their labour. However, many traders sell products which they did not produce, but instead have only purchased in mass quantities to resell in smaller amounts. So although traders do not engage in assembly line labour production, creativity is still not used in full capacity.

Marx’s notion of “reification” can be seen in the relationships that traders have with their customers. The market networks and their supportive elements are important for trader sustainability and success. However, many of these relationships are directly related to the goods that are sold. This aspect, however, is a component of the consumer model inherit to capitalism. This model can be that which further perpetuates alienation through the process of reification. The reification process sees the blurring of social and economic relations that becomes defined by the exchange of material goods. By generally being a player in the economic system that blurs social relations, people can become alienated from themselves and others, as these social relations have solely been created in and for the process of consumption. “…the notion of alienation is extended from a purely economic to a broader social phenomenon…alienation of the consumer…capitalism has a tendency to constantly extend the needs of people...goes beyond any rational human needs and starts to spur and stimulate artificial needs in a systematic large-scale manner” (Mandel, 1970, p.12).
It is apparent that informal trading can be seen as involving a possible challenge to some aspects of alienation created by exclusively labour-power work. However, alienation more broadly is still a presence that is unfortunately evident in a number of features of trading. What these features point to is that there may be steps for some to challenge the binds of alienated labour and lived alienation. Nevertheless, with the presence of the current systemic structures of capitalism, alienation more broadly may remain. The continued daily activities of traders that still only allow for a subsistent income, as well as the insecurity and vulnerability of their businesses can further be seen as elements of capitalism that can be alienating. Having to continually protect or fight for a position that persists with little improvement of one’s lived experience can manifest itself into a continual questioning of the value of one’s contribution and even presence. For traders who were questioned about this, the overwhelming response to such a condition was that although the daily strides to protect businesses and incomes were difficult, they were worth it when the trader’s family could eat at the end of the day and ultimately continue to survive.

As stated earlier, the reality and state of alienation that Marx speaks about is not inherent to humanness.

“...there emerges an inescapable conclusion that a society can be envisaged in which there will be no more alienation of labour and alienation of human beings. This is a historically produced and man-made evil, not an evil rooted in nature or human nature. Like everything else which has been made by man, it can also be unmade by man” (Mandel, 1970, p.17).

This sense of optimism that is part of Marx’s theory can be empowering in the face of the contradictions that all humans seem to find themselves in, which lead to social alienation. Keeping this optimism in mind, the ways in which the traders of MPTCM have expressed resistance can be seen as acting against elements of the capitalist system. Not all moments of resistance by traders in MPTCM were aimed to directly change the larger system, but they were strides that point to features inherent to capitalism, and which lead to the marginalisation of people pursuing survival-oriented livelihoods.
4.2 Trader Resistance Aimed at Protecting Livelihoods

Traders voiced the view that the incomes generated from informal businesses in MPTCM are only enough to subsist under current difficult conditions. “Whatever I make here I share it with them...To support my family, yes. And trading here and whatever you make, it’s only from the hand to the mouth. There’s nothing that I can say I can put in the bank. I don’t get a chance to put money in the bank” (Trader 7 Interview). This trader points to an important point that savings for her are nearly impossible. The notion of a hand-to-mouth income has become a general method of living expressed by most traders. This reiterated the dire impact of the eviction: “Money loss. Work is gonna be very poor...Okay, Council think there is money, there isn’t money like they think there is. But, like I said, money wise, it’s gonna be like it’s gonna be very poor. They take, they actually taking the people’s bread outta their mouth. That’s what they’re gonna do” (Trader 2 Interview).

Moreover, most traders running businesses in MPTCM hire at least one other person as an assistant. The livelihoods affected by the removal of business could then be the income for two families of four, for example.

Unemployment in South Africa stands at nearly 25% (Statistics South Africa, 2010, p.13). In Mitchells Plain alone “only 43% of the working age population are employed” (MP Nodal Economic Development Profile, n.d., p.5). Many traders enter the informal sector to secure an income in broader conditions of mass unemployment, albeit largely associated with subsistence.

“You know, in today’s life, I think the informal economy contributes so much to South Africans’ revenue and to their economy because they are not, people is losing jobs by the day. The only way they think of to make quick money or to earn a living or bread for that night is to sell something. That is the easiest way now, because they are not, they, I don’t see them creating jobs for us. Even for children finishing Matric, it’s difficult to get a job now, so how do you sustain yourself?” (Trader 3 Interview).

In the face of a lack of employment opportunities, traders then have personally created their own alternative. When presented with no other options, people have the skills and drive to work to meet needs.
“Informal trading is you come for a living you must trade. You come for a living here because you come for a living, Laura, and you want to succeed. You must work to come, you must work to come out there, out there on top. You, I don’t want to sit here every time, every year, you must grow and grow and grow. But the people don’t give that opportunity to us, they keep you back, back, they keep it back from us. They don’t want to come forward and say so and so and so. They keep it back. One day I want to say to my children, see what your mommy work for you. There’s something I did achieve in life. It’s not for us, it’s for our children. It’s like a heritage for them” (Trader 6 Interview).

However, as this trader points out, the economic infrastructure is not completely supportive of traders. Due to the fact that for many traders there are no, or little, alternative opportunities available to financially survive, working to protect what they have created for themselves has been at the heart of their resistance of the evictions.

The evictions in MPTCM pointed to a deeper sense of a loss of control that traders had over their livelihoods. When trader livelihoods are threatened, not only are daily needs at risk, but the deeper feelings of losing grasp over one’s self-sufficiency are also in danger. “Alienation is one of Marx’s more famous theories where he attempts to illuminate the lived experience of capitalism, highlighting the lack of control and self-realization in the labour process” (Yuill, 2005, p.126). What has emerged from the holistic presentation of traders is that daily life activities and methods of existence are at stake, not just incomes. Undergoing an eviction leaves traders without control over what they do on a daily basis and sends them back into a society with high levels of unemployment. In order to protect the entrepreneurial activities created, many traders resisted fervently against the upgrade. Situations like these that happen all over the country are important times of protest, and associations are often created primarily to resist these threats (Lindell, 2010, p.15). Demonstrated expressions of agency and resistance by traders must be recognised for their importance as methods of protecting livelihood activities.

However, methods of organising and expressions of collective resistance have not been widely recognised as features of the informal sector. “Rather than engaging in collective demand-making, it is argued, informal actors act in a quiet
and atomized fashion to address their immediate needs...However, individual everyday actions are not the only kind of political practices in which informal actors engage, or even their preferred mode of politics” (Lindell, 2010, p.2). Although the evictions were generally the most resisted features of the upgrade by CHATA, additional aspects, such as the permit system and the fracturing of the familial market dynamics were also important for traders to resist. Additionally, some measures of the upgrade were supported, as traders were widely not opposed to market renovations.

The agency of individual informal traders running businesses daily can be more confidently expressed by means of collective action (Lund and Skinner, 1999, p.10). Individual action outlined above that sees the creation of small businesses in the face of mass unemployment can be noted as an expression of agency. However, due to the severity of evictions, collective action was required for stronger resistance. In the case of MPTCM, trader organisations were started for a number of reasons, but essentially gave individuals a means to act in solidarity with others confronting the same conditions. This collective action was encouraged further by the creation of coalitions, which brought together a number of organisations around Cape Town. The continued daily presence of individual traders in MPTCM when faced with looming evictions, the consistency of meetings of trader organisations, the regular press releases written by a variety of actors, the mass marches by citywide coalitions and meetings with city officials by coalition representatives all played an important part in resistance. The multiple levels of agency and resistance are important in continued times of protest. Through these multiple levels of expressed agency, a number of voices can be heard while a unified voice is simultaneously a backbone of support.

Overall what these additional protests and instances of support point to is that there is an interplay of support and resistance that feed into the interplay of instances of the inclusion, exclusion and social incorporation of traders. This interplay must be analysed and recognised as it points to an important element of the position of traders in present society.
4.3 ‘Adverse Incorporation’ of Survival-Oriented Livelihoods

Ponte has written on the way in which local livelihoods can be approached in the current system, questioning the binary of inclusion/exclusion:

“Attention has to be paid both to the vertical links – the value chains that link local livelihoods ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ to distant and complex networks of economic production and exchange…– and to the horizontal ones – the ways in which the impact and nature of integration and inclusion into globalised systems are locally mediate…These processes and institutions can work to integrate poor people into the circuits and networks of ‘developed’ society in ways that marginalize them undermining their ability to control and impact upon the system into which they are locked. This confirms the importance of moving beyond any simple conceptual opposition of ‘inclusion’ or ‘exclusion’…towards an understanding of ‘how, when and under what conditions’. Integration and incorporation are not necessarily empowering. Sometimes exclusion can be valid strategies for the poor” (Ponte, 2008, p.12).

Ponte has identified the notion that local livelihoods, like traders in MPTCM, are intimately connected to larger networks of capital. This was initially depicted when outlining the daily life of one particular informal trader in the market. Where and how traders obtain their goods links them vertically to larger businesses that sell products at wholesale. Additionally, some traders at MPTCM buy in bulk and sell smaller amounts to smaller traders. These are the ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ networks that Ponte has identified and are those that blur the separation between informal and formal economy activities. The horizontal links indicated by Ponte are more directly related to the element of community that became apparent in and around MPTCM. As a result of their vertical links to the South African economy at large, MPTCM traders are able to locally serve their surrounding communities. Traders’ connections to “globalised systems” allow them the ability to serve their community with the goods and needs that are required, but at a price that is affordable. What Ponte further points out is that the vertical networks and globalised systems are not necessarily supportive of people like traders. More importantly, these systems, more often than not, actually undermine them.

The social positions of traders are highly dependent on circumstance and met with varying degrees of support in South Africa. A market that has been
highlighted for government support of traders is Warwick Junction Market in Durban.

“Much of the success of the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project, which was set up in 1995, is due to the way in which the council was prepared to suspend conventional management practices in favour of a participative inter-departmental approach. This combined the skills and knowledge of officials in the renewal process and in ongoing management of the area. Street traders and their organisations were integrally involved in shaping this change and in raising key issues” (Dobson, Skinner and Nicholson, 2009, p.1).

Warwick Junction is one of the country’s largest informal markets, operating as a space for between 5000 and 8000 traders on any given day (Dobson, Skinner and Nicholson, 2009, p.2). The reasons for the successes in Durban rest on a number of efforts.

“Existing empirical evidence suggests that in the Durban case there is a combination of the following factors: consultation between traders and council officials, institutional innovation in the form of area-based management, collective action among street traders and a political moment combined with a well-resourced local authority” (Skinner, 2008, p.239).

The growing support for traders in Durban, however, took a downturn in 2007. Skinner has presumed this to be directly related to the reconstructions and preparations associated with the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Lessons can be learned from this pattern of support and subsequent crackdown on a broader scale. “These recent developments suggest that processes of incorporation or exclusion of street traders are part of a dynamic and ongoing political struggle” (Skinner, 2008, p.240).

Keeping Ponte in mind, methods of analysing the placement of informal traders through notions of inclusion or exclusion are more complex due to the multi-dimensional links that traders have to society. The concepts of inclusion and exclusion raise a binary entrenched in value judgments that don’t fully challenge the larger systemic problems: associating inclusion as a positive position versus the negative notion of exclusion. This binary does not see the dynamic, and sometimes contradictory nature of the positions that people have in society, nor does it challenge the overall societal structure. An analysis of traders through the notions of
inclusion and exclusion leaves us with isolated instances that don’t allow us to fully understand the overall position of traders in society.

“Poor and disadvantaged groups and individuals more usually find themselves dealing with a complex situation characterised by the interaction of inclusion and exclusion” (du Toit, 2007, p.2). This interaction is evident in MPTCM.

“At the moment, yes, I do feel excluded because they want to marginalize us, especially the city. And, I mean, they were supposed to protect us. You know when it’s voting time they give you so much promises and nothing, nothing happens. They should be there for the people, I mean we’re trying to make a honest living and the 2010 coming, I think they just thinking about themselves now. They not thinking about the Traders, they want to put us out of work and marginalize us, it’s not on” (Trader 3 Interview).

The sense of exclusion that traders expressed is directly related to the type of work that they do to financially support themselves and others.

“We feel excluded. We feel like, we feel like outcasts here because nothing’s, decisions were made, things were being done without us, we were not being consulted...You see, why do they exclude us? And we are creating, we are creating opportunities, we are creating employment” (Trader 10 Interview).

The lack of adequate consultation that the government has had directly with many traders regarding MPTCM has encouraged this feeling of exclusion to arise. “In South Africa I think informal trading is excluded...In the way that Council doesn’t sit with the right people to make, negotiate with” (Trader 9 Interview). The evictions of traders, as well as the sense of voices not being listened to, give weight to the feelings of exclusion. Although a number of traders expressed feeling excluded from the processes of the upgrade, instances of their inclusion should not be ignored. Although possibly without the best of intentions and numerous hurdles, traders were included in the objection process when asked to submit written letters of objection, attend the workshop to raise concerns and engage in the tribunal. However, these cases were made in such a way where processes of inclusion actually excluded more traders in practice.

Using the Umbrella Body, the city claimed the inclusion of traders in the new developments of the market. However, a number of traders that were not in support of the Umbrella Body structure were simultaneously excluded. Due to feeling
excluded from city decisions, as well as the undemocratic elections of the Umbrella Body, traders joined various independently created trader associations. These associations offered a sense of inclusion that was met with support, solidarity and various groupings that supported the interests of traders working in the same areas of the market. The point being raised is that in numerous cases and practices of the market, traders were simultaneously included and excluded. This, however, is not unique solely to traders of MPTCM, but is a feature of informal trading in general.

Individually, traders are also negotiating daily their own societal positions. In a society with staggering levels of unemployment, informal traders are in a unique position. Most traders have historically been unable to find work elsewhere. In the face of being excluded from employment opportunities they have created their own jobs. Now traders are recognised and included in a sector in itself. However, this is again met with exclusion from benefits that are intrinsic to formal employment: job security, health benefits, wage standards, etc. These benefits though are not always secured. The interplay that the findings are starting to reveal between the concepts of inclusion and exclusion is one that challenges the binary and its assumed positive and negative characteristics, respectively. The challenge that is being made for informal traders is the question of whether inclusion is the goal.

The fundamental reasoning behind the upgrade of MPTCM, as well as the application of the by-law to make other areas of the city spaces of restrictive trading, is an attempt to control the informal sector and sideline it for formal economic development. These practices reveal the hierarchy that places formal employment above the informal. However, the challenge that is being made is that formal employment in itself is not flawless. The sense of independence, the confidence of being a business owner and the relationships and networks intrinsic to informal market environments are just a few features of informal markets that are lost in this equation that determines the hierarchy. The general assumption that formal employment will overturn the difficulties that informal workers face is not certain. As has been outlined, engagement in employment created in capitalist society comes with its own set of issues and is part of a larger problematic structure.
“In these accounts, exclusion and inclusion are often counterposed to one another in simplistic and normative ways: poverty is conceived to flow directly out of the fact that some group or other is (usually as a result of some discriminatory practice or political barrier) excluded from a realm of ‘mainstream’ economical or social activity; participation wherein is seen as an unproblematic good in itself” (du Toit, 2007, p.1).

Du Toit is suggesting the vital systemic problem that can no longer be ignored that has been a focal point of this research: capitalism is an economic system that has social influences that create vast inequalities and methods of marginalisation.

Du Toit has identified the overall problem of an inclusion/exclusion analysis. He bluntly pointed out the exploitative nature of being included in a system that is problematic in and of itself, and that continually marginalises those in disadvantageous societal positions. In order to overcome the inclusion/exclusion binary, du Toit has forwarded a concept, also raised by Ponte, to be used in analysing the position of marginalised groups in South Africa’s capitalist society: adverse incorporation.

“Couched at this general level, the concept of adverse incorporation thus functions as a fairly broad critique of neoliberal accounts of poverty and development, accounts that underplay the risks and disadvantages of inclusion and participation in unregulated capitalist markets; in fact in many ways it recapitulates much of the terrain covered in earlier decades by variants of dependency theory” (du Toit, 2007, p.2).

In applying the concept of adverse incorporation, du Toit has noted how it must be used as a method of analysis in a way that does not change its meaning. Adverse incorporation is not meant to draw a dichotomous analysis, but is rather meant to encourage the bridging of dichotomy that demonstrates the reality of situations.

Adverse incorporation addresses the challenges and flaws of the system at large and recognises that our placement within it is complex. “...the analysis of social exclusion or incorporation should pay attention not only to in/exclusion from markets, but also to insertion in other social formation: social networks, patron-client relations, and so on” (du Toit, 2007, p.17). This is directly pertinent to the positions of informal traders and demonstrates why it is important to look beyond the traders as just business people.
A defining feature of the livelihoods of informal traders is that of a life of subsistence. With reference to his research on agro-food chains in Mt. Frere, du Toit poses an important point regarding livelihoods of subsistence as analysed against the concept of adverse incorporation. “Subsistence production plays an important role, not only through its direct contribution to household income, but also as part of the local practices through which moral community, neighbourliness, and social standing are enacted and maintained” (du Toit, 2007, p.17). As is evident in MPTCM, subsistent livelihoods of informal businesses are also defined by their complex local networks. Markets need to be seen in light of their social impacts and not solely their narrowly economic contributions. This was a defining flaw of the way in which the city approached the renovation and eviction process in MPTCM. Without strongly putting weight on the social networks and daily details of traders’ existence in the market, the city was ignoring the dynamic nature of how the market operates, as well as how such a change in the market can effect the social interaction of traders, their organising power and the success of their businesses.
CONCLUSION

Skinner once noted "...the livelihood activities of street traders to be critically shaped by a complex interplay of national and local government policy approaches, combined with pressure from both formal business and collective action among street traders" (Skinner, 2008, p.228). Due to this interplay, there are various perspectives from which to approach informal economy research. An approach aimed to place traders at the centre highlights the intimate level of description and further analysis that can emerge from just one perspective.

It has been shown that the daily routines of informal traders can turn into 15-hour workdays that in the end contribute widely to hand-to-mouth incomes. Informal markets are spaces where traders form intricate networks and relationships. Trader organisations, relationships and familial bonds have been built in MPTCM and further argue for the dire effects that evictions can create. During stages of eviction resistance, these networks became spaces for collective action and energy, encouraging and supporting traders in the struggle to protect their livelihoods.

The trading conditions of MPTCM were never in a state seen to be ideal by either traders or the city. And although traders spoke about the improvements that were necessary and wanted, they did not accept them at the expense of livelihoods. It is apparent that improvements in the market conditions are feasible, but in order for all traders to benefit, more collaboration between officials and traders must occur. A primary step requires recognition that traders are intimately tied to MPTCM and thus they hold knowledge about its daily running that should be valued and used towards changes that may take place.

In looking into the routines of traders and the conditions under which they work daily, they face vulnerability and insecurity in these positions. These aspects are ones that challenge the stability of informal work. Although resisted, these features played out in MPTCM concretely on 8 March 2010 in the form of evictions. The legal and business-supported reasons behind the evictions rested largely on the upgrade of MPTCM and the implementation of the City of Cape Town Informal
Trader By-Law. CHATA members expressed feelings that the evictions were solely supporting big business and sidelining informal traders in the process. Informal traders left without spaces to trade feared for the loss of their already survival-oriented livelihoods.

The holistic approach of this research that has highlighted features of livelihoods has revealed an imperative perspective on informal markets. The dynamic elements experienced daily by traders in a market like MPTCM are important to grasp in order to understand the impacts that evictions may have. It has shown to be apparent from this work that there exists a gap, a gap between the daily undertakings of businesses in and around MPTCM and the policies enforced by government that often alter the quality of business, and ultimately livelihoods. Knowledge about how to run informal businesses is in the hands of traders themselves, but factors that determine their success are embedded in the decisions made by the city. When areas are deemed restrictive areas of trading and the implementated policies would remove traders, the livelihood and market dynamics outlined here should be considered.

Emerging from this approach are discussions about the positions of traders in South African society. Identifying alienation as a key Marxist theory associated with the running of a capitalist society has allowed for an analysis into the alienation experienced and challenged by informal traders. The positions that traders have in South Africa can be understood by means of du Toit and Ponte’s theory of ‘adverse incorporation.’ This theory allows us to more clearly recognise the battle felt and overcome by traders. They are incorporated in a system where they are simultaneously controlled and alienated, and also creating their own livelihoods in the face of no alternatives. In order to retain this self-made independence, traders work daily in a sector, which is not fully supported, and collectively organise to protect informal markets. This struggle and the understanding gained from the experience of traders in these positions are at the core of where they see their place within a capitalist system.

As has been noted, a breadth of research has focused on informal trading in Durban and nationally. However, there is still limited research that has been done
about informal trading in Cape Town. Due to the limited parameters for this research, only MPTCM could be considered. Further research should consider other markets in Cape Town, as they are facing similar eviction and development threats. Traders are collectively organising in an attempt to similarly protect their livelihoods in other areas of the city. Although this work’s results can be applied to other markets, it shows strongly that each and every market is unique. Thus, separate studies can look at livelihood complexity using a similar framework, but should take into account each market and trader specific situations. Further research that puts traders at the centre could work positively to inform the decisions of policy makers in more thoroughly understanding the impact of development decisions.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Interviews

1. Trader 1, CHATA member – Conducted on 22 October 2009 in MPTCM in an inside furniture shop of the trader’s friend.
2. Trader 2, CHATA member – Conducted on 27 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
3. Trader 3, CHATA member – Conducted on 27 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
4. Trader 4, CHATA member – Conducted on 28 October 2009 in MPTCM across from trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
5. Trader 5, CHATA member – Conducted on 29 October 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
6. Trader 6, CHATA member – Conducted on 4 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
7. Trader 7, CHATA member – Conducted on 4 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Symphony Lane.
8. Trader 8, CHATA member – Conducted on 6 November 2009 in MPTCM at trader’s stand in Harmony Square.
9. Trader 9, CHATA member – Conducted on 17 November 2009 in MPTCM at an inside food shop of the trader’s friend.
10. Trader 10, Secretary of 5th Avenue Traders Association – Conducted on November 17, 2009 on the outskirts of MPTCM on a bench near trader’s fruit and veg stand on 5th Avenue.
11. CT Market 1 – Conducted on 16 December 2009 – At CTM in Epping. Was a joint interview with two workers of the same family business in the People’s Market.
12. CT Market 2 – Conducted on 31 December 2009 at CTM in Epping where worker runs family fruit and veg business in the People’s Market.
13. CT Market 3 – Conducted on 9 March 2010 at CTM offices in Epping with the company’s buying manager in his offices inside business building.
14. CT Official – Conducted on 15 February 2010 at official’s office in City of Cape Town Civic Centre building in the CBD.
Appendix B: Interview Consent Forms

CHATA Member Interviewee Consent Form:
I consent to allow this recorded interview done by University of Cape Town masters student Laura Huss to be used in full for her research regarding informal trading in Mitchells Plain Town Centre.
In my consent I and Laura agree that:
• My name will be held confidential in the writing of the report
• I have the right to request a copy of the transcribed interview from Laura
• I have a right to a see the final research as at least 3 copies will be made available to CHATA (Concerned Hawkers and Traders Association) after its submission on September 1, 2010
• Laura may use any or no information from the recorded interview, including direct quotes, in the written dissertation.

Name:_______________________________________________________
Signature:___________________________________________________
Date:_______________________________________________________

Non-CHATA Member Interviewee Consent Form:
I consent to allow this recorded interview done by University of Cape Town masters student Laura Huss to be used in full for her research regarding informal trading in Mitchells Plain Town Centre.
In my consent I and Laura agree that:
• My name will be held confidential in the writing of the report
• I have the right to request a copy of the transcribed interview from Laura
• I have a right to request and see the final research after its submission on September 1, 2010
• Laura may use any or no information from the recorded interview, including direct quotes, in the written dissertation.
• After I have looked over the transcribed interview that Laura has provided to me, I have the right to withdraw any quotes that were said in the interview to be used in the final written thesis

Name:_______________________________________________________
Signature:___________________________________________________
Date:_______________________________________________________
Appendix C: Email Requests for Interviews

Cape Town Market Email Interview Request:

Dear __________ of Cape Town Market:

My name is Mary Laura Huss and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town studying Development Studies. I am currently working on my dissertation doing research on the activity of the informal economy in South Africa. I am looking at the way in which Trader’s are included in the current economic system of South Africa, specifically focusing on the Trader’s market in Mitchells Plain Town Centre.

I am emailing you, as I would like to coordinate a time to interview you as part of the research, if you would be willing. One of the elements to my research is tracking where the goods that are being sold in the markets are coming from. I have chosen to track produce and look into the structure of Epping/Cape Town Market as it seems to be the main distributer of produce to markets in Cape Town. I would like to understand more about Epping/Cape Town Market in terms of its history, its relationship with the informal markets in Cape Town and the produce that it sells.

I will be returning to Cape Town from holiday on February 8, 2010. Would it be possible to set up an interview between February 9, 2010 and February 18, 2010? It is a requirement for my degree at UCT that I follow strict ethical principles when conducting the research. Before conducting an interview I would be willing to write up an agreement with you and comply with any requirements you may have in accordance with the ethical requirements of my research and degree.

If you need any further information from me regarding my research, feel free to contact me. You may reach me by telephone at 0799161025 or by email at MLaura.Huss@gmail.com.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting and speaking with you in the near future.

Best,
Mary Laura Huss

City of Cape Town Official Email Request:

Dear __________:

My name is Mary Laura Huss and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town studying Development Studies. I am currently working on my dissertation doing research on the activity of the informal economy in South Africa. I am looking at the way in which Trader’s are included in the current economic system of South Africa, specifically focusing on the Trader’s market in Mitchells Plain Town Centre, Cape Town.

I am emailing you, as I would like to coordinate a time to interview you as part of the research if you would be willing. I would like to understand what is happening to the market according to you and your offices. I am also further interested in the bylaws affecting Traders in Cape Town, and details
of the permit system for informal trading that has been implemented around the City and seems to be part of the plan for the Trader’s market in Mitchells Plain.

I will be returning to Cape Town from holiday on February 8, 2010. Would it be possible to set up an interview between February 9, 2010 and February 18, 2010? It is a requirement for my degree at UCT that I follow strict ethical principles when conducting the research. Before conducting an interview I would be willing to write up an agreement with you and comply with any requirements you may have in accordance with the ethical requirements of my research and degree.

Feel free to contact me regarding the co-ordination of this interview and if you need any further information from me regarding my research. You may reach me by telephone at 0799161025 or by email at MLaura.Huss@gmail.com.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting and speaking with you in the near future.

Best,

Mary Laura Huss
Appendix D: Interview Questions and Topics:
(Guided conversation for all Semi-Structured Interviews)

**Epping/Cape Town Market Trader Interviews:**
1. How long have you been trading here?
2. Can you give me a history of your business from the original market in Town to your current situation in Epping?
   a. Who was Trading in Town?
   b. Why were you moved to Epping?
3. How did the conditions change after being moved to Epping?
4. Do you pay rent to trade here now?
5. Was this area where you trade built by the City? Is it owned by the City?
6. How have the conditions changed since the City sold Epping?
7. Do you have a contract to trade here? Permit system?
8. How do you feel about the relationship you have with the owners of Epping? Do you feel respected by them?
9. How would you define what you do? What would you call yourself and your work?
10. Who do you support on your income?
11. Where do you get the Fruit and Veg that you sell? (what farms)
12. Do you get Fruit and Veg from the same place as the larger Epping Market?
13. Since the move from Town, can you give me a bit of a history of this area and the trading that goes on here?
14. How are you and the Traders in this area different from the ones outside of the gates? Do you have a different relationship or contract with the city?
15. Would you prefer trading here or outside of the gates? Why?
16. Why did you become a Trader?
18. What is your perception of the informal economy?
19. What do you see as important about what you do?
20. Have you heard about or do you know about what is happening right now in Mitchells Plain with the Traders?
21. What is your opinion about what you know about what is happening with the Traders in Mitchells Plain?

**CHATA Member Trader Member Questions:**
1. How long have you been trading in the Town Centre?
2. Where do you trade in the Town Centre? Where have you traded in the Town Centre?
3. Do you pay rent for a stall in the Town Centre? How much? How much will you pay?
4. What do you sell?
5. Where do the products you sell come from? – Issue of Tracking Goods
6. How would you define what you do?
7. Who do you support on your income?
8. Are you included in the City’s relocation process?
9. Can you explain to me what is happening in the Town Centre now? /Tell me about the City’s relocation process? – What happened? Was it transparent? What will your conditions be after the eviction?
10. Do you want the Town Centre to be renovated? – If so, How? What would your suggestions be?
11. How would you define South Africa’s economy?
12. How do you feel about your position within the economy of South Africa? Do you feel respected? Included? Marginalised?
13. What is your perception of the informal economy?
14. History of the Town Centre Market question
15. What is your deepest concern about what is happening now? What are you worried about if the process continues?
16. Female Traders: Do you feel any significance in the fact that you are a female trader? How are the female traders treated?
17. In what ways do you find what you do as important?
18. Why are you a trader? Why are you in the informal sector? Choice or force?

Non-CHATA MPTCM Trader Interviews:
1. How long have you been trading in Mitchells Plain?
2. What do you sell?
3. Where do you trade?
4. Do you pay rent?
5. Where do the products you sell come from?
6. How would you define what you do?
7. Who do you support with your income?
8. What Trader’s Association are you a part of?
9. Can you tell me about your Trader’s Association? History? Problems facing today?
10. How are you affected by the City’s renovation process of the Town Centre?
11. Do you want Mitchells Plain Centre to be renovated? What improvements would you like to see?
12. Why do you think the City is renovating the Centre?
13. What are the reasons why the city is trying to evict Traders?
14. Do you feel included or excluded in South Africa as a Trader?
15. In what ways do you find what you do as important?
16. Why did you become a Trader? Why are you part of the informal sector?
17. What are your perceptions of the informal economy in South Africa? How would you describe it?
18. What are your worries if the renovation process continues? What are your deepest concerns with it?
19. Have you heard a lot about the eviction problems in the Town Centre? How are you affected by it?
20. Do you feel any significance in the fact that you are a female trader? How are female traders treated differently?

Cape Town Market Businessman/Official Interview:
1. What is your position at Cape Town Market?
   a. How long have you been in this position?
2. How long has Cape Town Market been privatized?
3. Was the privatisation process initiated by the City of Cape Town?
4. Privatisation plays a controversial role in service delivery in South Africa today. Has Cape Town Market has been able to be successful in both providing a quality service to the City and in supporting workers? How has this been possible? What has Cape Town Market done differently from other privatized companies?
5. What relationship does the Cape Town Market have with the informal traders on sight and in the City of Cape Town?
   a. What relationship does the Cape Town Market have with the city of Cape Town?
6. How does the Cape Town Market support informal traders?
7. Why does the Cape Town Market supports informal traders?
   a. Does the Cape Town Market depend on the existence of informal traders?
8. It seems that all the business here at Cape Town Market is quite formalized, how then does Cape Town Market distinguish between the formal and informal economy?
   a. How would you define the formal economy?
   b. How would you define the informal economy?
9. **Ask depending on question 8** - A number of people have defined South Africa’s economy as dualist as in saying that there are two economies – the formal and the informal. It seems that at Cape Town Market these two supposed separate economies are working together. Do you believe this is true?
10. What is the situation of the informal traders outside of the gate?
    a. How are they related to the Cape Town Market?
11. Can Cape Town Market be of assistance to informal traders in areas like Mitchells Plain?
12. In the way that South Africa’s is set up do you believe there is room for informal businesses to thrive and be supported?
13. General Topics to Cover in Interview:
    a. Company’s Relationship with Traders and City
    b. Privatisation
    c. Informal Business in South Africa
    d. Inside/Outside Epping Traders
e. Why Interested in Informal Trading?
f. Intersection of Formal and Informal

Cape Town City Official Interview:
1. Please explain your position for the City of Cape Town. And what you do in relation to informal trading and traders around the City?
2. At the moment what relationship does the city have with Informal Traders?
3. How does the City support Informal Trading in Cape Town?
4. Are you familiar with the informal trading situation in Mitchells Plain Town Centre?
5. How can the city work better with Informal Traders in the future?
6. How is the new bylaw that was passed in December of 2009 affecting the city’s relationship with Informal Traders?
7. Please explain the details about the permit system that the City wants to implement?
   a. Are you in support of the permit system?
   b. What are the benefits of the permit system?
   c. What are the negatives of the permit system?
8. In the way that South Africa is set up is there room for informal businesses to thrive and be supported?
9. It is often the case that informal traders enter the sector due to lack of employment elsewhere What alternative employment opportunities is the City providing for traders that have been removed or limited in their work due to the current bylaws passed in December of 2009?
10. Would the city want to eventually formalize all informal businesses? If so, Why?
11. Is informal trading changing and has the new bylaw that was passed in December of 2009 been because of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the FIFA regulations?
12. General Topics to Cover in Interview:
   a. City’s Relationship with Informal Traders
   b. Permit System
   c. FIFA
   d. System and Traders
Appendix E: Sample Interview Transcript

Trader 3 Interview – Conducted October 27, 2009
(Interviewer speech in bold, Interviewee speech in regular font)

Interviewer (ML Huss): How long have you been trading here?
Interviewee (Trader 3): My self, 19 years.
And for anybody else? Why do you say your self?
I was in school.
Okay.
I was in school when I trade with my cousin. Just casual.
Was that in the Town Centre as well?
Yeah.
Where, have you always traded here?
On the bridge in the off ramp. You go onto the bridge on the off ramp.
Is that near where your mother trades?
Yeah.
I met her the other day. And that's where all the trading started right?
Yeah, basically yes. And then everybody started moving down into the Centre.
Do you pay rent right now for your stall?
Currently no. We used to pay.
Okay. How much did you used to pay and when was that?
We used to pay 80 Rand a month for the trading bay, for one trading bay. If you had more than that, then obviously, you know, times that. It was like in two years ago.
Two years ago, yeah, I threw away all my slips but anyway. We were paying to Council when they did their allocation of the trading bays, I think that was like when Martin was here in 2004 I think. Mischka has that, I'm sure she has that.
Okay. How big were the bays then?
It was also two by two. And fruit and veg, um some were two by twos. Fruit and veg was I think four by fours and then the spices was three by twos.
Okay. And how long did that last, the rent paying?
It didn’t, it didn’t last. I think about a year or something because they didn’t give proper or adequate covering for the traders and then the traders start to stop pay, started to stop because their stuff rained wet, their stuff damaged in the sun, things like that. Things that they promised us never happened, you know?, and then people stopped paying.
Okay. And then, uh, with the new allocation it will be, how much will you pay if that happens?
They say it's starting off with 80 Rand. But according, have you read the –
It's gonna increase.
Increase, yeah.
Yeah I have all that paperwork.
Yes I know, we were in the office.
Yeah, so much paperwork. Okay, so, sorry, what do you sell generally?
Me, I’m, I’m a seasonal trader. When it’s, I’ll say, yeah seasonal is the best, I won’t say general. Seasonal just because when it’s Mother’s Day I sell everything that is for Mother’s Day; Valentine’s Day I sell everything for Valentine’s Day; when it’s winter I sell winter stuff, jackets and stuff; when it’s summer, I sell all summer goodies like dresses, toys, cools, you know?; when it’s Back-to-School I get a completely Back-to-School. So I’m seasonal.

Okay. Where do you get the goods that you trade?
At different places. Um, from entire Town right through to Bellville. All different places.

Is it usually from, like, warehouse shops? Or are they from other traders? Or is it from –
No, it’s from wholesalers.

Wholesalers, yeah that’s what I meant, okay. But all within Cape Town, right?
Yeah. So there you can see where we contribute a lot to the economy and they tell us that we don’t. If we don’t shop by them, how are they gonna, you know? That’s how they create their revenue for sales, from us.

So it’s like the formal businesses are linked to the informal businesses.
Yes. Most definitely.

How would you define what you do? What would you call yourself?
Entrepreneur.

Entrepreneur.
That’s putting it nicely. Otherwise I just say trade, but Entrepreneur sounds nicer.

No, it’s good. You can call yourself whatever you wanna call yourself. And who do you support on your income?
Well my husband isn’t working for over a year. And I’ve got my son to see to, myself, my momma can’t pay her bills also, you know, because this isn’t that good everyday.

Do you also have a daughter?
No, just my son.

No? Whose the girl that I met here with your son?
My sister’s daughter.

Your sister’s daughter, okay. Cause I met your son then. Um, are you included in the relocation process? Did you apply for –?
Well I applied, but that was under duress. Because when I went in that day, the way they did it was wrong. The traders that came after us got letters before us to come in. We, the old traders is like basically excluded, it’s all like new people or I would say, favouritism, you know? That is what happened there. I went to, I went in but by the time that I came there, all the best bays was taken. And then I told them ‘I don’t want a bay because I’m doing this under duress, you people didn’t liaise with us, you didn’t tell us about anything, you had meetings’ and this is what is happening now. And they were very intimidating to people, extremely. You had to be there that day. They were extremely intimidating, hey.

In what way?
Hey?

In what way?
If you would come up and say, um, ‘Why me only now?’ then they would tell you ‘Um, the computer kicked it out.’ But the computer only kicks out what you put in,
right? They think we’re that stupid. And even like them, you know, the people on the panel like Mrs. Baker’s son, you know, he is working for the city, how come he’s got two bays? He doesn’t trade in the Town Centre at all. And I mean you can go there now and you won’t see him. (120, you want? okay) And then –

**Let me know too if you need to go and we can stop.**

No, it’s fine. And then we’ve got Mrs. Roland that is on there, but she’s, she’s on the, the steering committee, she’s on the umbrella body, but she’s out of the Town Centre for over five years. And I don’t see the need that she should be there. Mr. Brinkus that is on the chairperson, that is never, that is not a trader for over fifteen years, what is he doing there? What is in it for them? Then Mrs. Roland puts in all her brothers that is not trading here and their brother and sister in laws is all getting bays. How’s that on? And I mean when we approached, I approached the city officials and I told them and I mean yet? Even with our objection letters that I sent in, I think Mischka’s got mine I don’t know where’s mine. You saw the way that they responded to the objection letters.

**Yup. You know when you said that they, you know they think you’re stupid, um, when you go there with information that’s right and with facts and with a letter, how do they respond to that?**

No, look, they told you to put in your objection, all right? It will be noted, they will come back to you with a letter. The way they came back to you with that letter, I showed you my sister’s letter because I don’t think I’ve got mine, um, you tell them like this, according to their criteria, have you seen their criteria?

**Mmhm. For the, for the permit system?**

For the allocation of the bays. Right, the criteria states that you, if you are out of the Centre for three months, you will not get a bay. It also states that if you have, um, rented out your bay, you will not get a bay. People come in and tell them blatantly in their face, ‘I’ve rented out mine,’ and they get a bay. People that is gone for over five years and they came back has got all their bays, notice that. That’s biasness. And basically they are contradicting their own by-law, um by-laws; and their own criteria. And when they gave that application form, um, to go and register, they didn’t attach the criteria to it. Do you understand?

**Oh, yeah.**

So a lot of people don’t know it. And the extra permit they didn’t attach that to it as well.

**When, how did you find out about the criteria?**

Some, you see, they gave some and they didn’t give some. They’re clever. They’re very clever in the way they deal with these stuff.

**So you found out about the permit system then through the, you had an attachment?**

Um, no. I got by this other girlie. Another girlie she showed, she showed it to me. **A trader?**

And the criteria I got somewhere else as well. The criteria of the permit. And they always used to say it was gonna be on a point system. What happened to the point system? And another thing was this, they also said that if you’re a weekend trader you would go onto a waiting list and then, then only they would give you, see to you. But on their umbrella body, two, it used to be two weekend traders, that is Auntie
Kohle and that is Jasmine Harris. Currently I, I see Jasmine Harris now, now only working. So how come she has got a bay before everybody else? And Mrs. Baker then, and what is her husband doing trading in the centre, he also got bays and he’s not trading in the Centre. You understand? There’s all the biases that is happening here, so I, I don’t feel that I can go for a permit. There’s too much unfairness happening. And also, the conditions of the permit, have you seen it? Did Mischka tell you?

**Mmhmm. Yeah I got a copy of it.**

Now what do we think, we’re back in the apartheid system where you must renew it every month. What are they taking us for? So which means they can kick us out at any moment and you can do nothing about it because you have already signed your rights away. That is basically what they telling you, signing everything away to them you giving them the right to do whatever they want to with you. That is their permit right.

**Yeah, okay. What, um, how will the conditions, what will the conditions be like in the Town Centre after the process? From what you can tell, like how are things going to change?**

Drastically, I mean, should, if I, I’m just giving you example, if I move from here, neh? And they put me, allocate me somewhere over there, this is the way the people, the people are, of Mitchells Plain is, they’re not gonna look for you man. The nearest one is the best one, so even if you go to the market, they’re not gonna come look for you. You’re not a shop like to say ‘Listen here, I’ve moved around the corner’ or, where are you gonna put it out? So now they’re telling you, ‘so what is five metres gonna do to you’, five metres does a lot to you in the informal sector. And with the economy now and with the recession, your business doesn’t increase, it’s gonna take a slump. And it’s gonna take time to rebuild again. Which is not on with, I mean everything happening now, water’s going up, rent is going up, electricity is going up, how am I supposed to feed your children? And this permit, I am not happy with this permit at all. Because with this permit you have to keep it on you every single day so if they come around and you don’t have it, you get fined for it. Like the “dormvas” – you know of those years if you didn’t have it you get fined or you get thrown in jail. What’s up with them now?

**Do you, in any way, do you want the Town Centre to be renovated? Is there anything that you, suggestions that you would like for any sort of renovation? You offer your suggestions, that’s what I’m asking.**

I can’t see this. Yes, you know, they can, they can put a dome right over for us to trade in and not rain wet or our stuff to damage in the sun like they promised and it never materialized for over years. Um, they can beautify it. Yes, put up, you know. So like if it rains and the people don’t run to Promenade. Then they can run to the Town Centre because they know there here’s shelter. They won’t rain wet, it will be more comfortable. They can, they can make a situation like that where it will be comfortable for the trader and comfortable for the shops as well. They, if they give us proper covering, people won’t stand against the shop windows. But it doesn’t mean they have to move us out completely out of the lanes. They can make the lanes nice. Put a unified structure for everybody and I mean, make it look nice! Uniformity is a good, is a good way to go, but properly.
How is your relationship with the businesses around you?
Quite fine. I mean, you know, on Saturdays then um, the, the, the toilets here is closed and I mean it’s far to walk to the public toilets; we can go into the shops and we can use their facilities here, I mean they allow us. You see? And even if like we see somebody steal something from them, we would stop them and get their goods back, you know?, so it’s like a good relationship.

And they don’t, they don’t mind you guys trading here at all or anything?
Not that I know of. So far, not that I know of. I’ve got a good relationship. My son brought this in the shop and he keeps it for me every day. I use their facilities to go to the bathroom, so I don’t have a problem, yeah.

So you have a good relationship. How would you define, or what would you say South Africa’s, South Africa’s economic system, would you say it includes you? Or it excludes you? Or, um, do you feel respected within Capitalism?
At the moment, Capitalism, No. At the moment, yes, I do feel excluded because they want to marginalize us, especially the city. And, I mean, they were supposed to protect us. You know when it’s voting time they give you so much promises and nothing, nothing happens. They should be there for the people, I mean we’re trying to make a honest living and the 2010 coming, I think they just thinking about themselves now. They not thinking about the Traders, they want to put us out of work and marginalize us, it’s not on. We don’t get supported, I mean, we don’t get grants here, nothing. They not, I mean, I can’t go apply, they’re gonna tell me ‘No’ if I go apply for a, a grant for my family, they’re not gonna give me money. Because I’m paying. You see, so they don’t see to me in any way. I’ve gotta sustain my self. And basically at the moment, I don’t have any skills because I didn’t, I couldn’t go study. There wasn’t money to go study. This is all I know, basically this is a career for me. No I finished my matric, ey. I’ve got my matric, I finished school. But I mean, you know, further, higher education.

And you were working while you were finishing your matric too right?
Yeah, part-time.

So what is your perception of the informal economy or the informal sector? How would you define it?
You know, in today’s life, I think the informal economy contributes so much to South Africans’ revenue and to their economy because they are not, people is losing jobs by the day. They only way they think of to make quick money or to earn a living or bread for that night is to sell something. That is the easiest way now, because they are not, they, I don’t see them creating any jobs for us. Even for children finishing Matric, it’s difficult to get a job now, so how do you sustain yourself? And this is one of the biggest and I think it’s the fastest growing economy in South Africa.

Do you, do you see the Town Centre also, the Traders keep growing, there’s more and more Traders?
Yes.

What is your, why, why did you become a Trader? Why are you part of the informal sector?
Well, we were very poor. Um, we grew up without the father, my mother didn’t have money, there wasn’t money to go study. We were three kids, my brother, yes I worked so that he could go study, so he went to study, but I didn’t have the
opportunity. We had to survive, you know?. Survival of the fittest. And I mean that is
the, the, the situation of most children now-a-days. Life is very difficult and I mean
it’s not becoming easier at all. You know the recession happening, nothing is easier.
And government isn’t making anything easier, I mean with the increase of electricity
going up so much, 45%, for every year.

Yeah.

And nothing is coming down even, I mean, food stuff, groceries, nothing is coming
down, everything is going up. So they’re not seeing to the poor. And this is, I mean
this, I don’t see why they should upgrade this so much. Because, this is a sub-
economical area. And if you look at Mitchells Plain, they, it’s not a lot of affluent
people here. It’s very, it’s I would say, it’s like the poorest of the poor here if you’re
going to Tafelsig, Eastridge and that. This isn’t a affluent area like maybe I would say
Ottery or you know Landsdowne, that kinda areas. Here the people survive. You
know? It’s survivalist here. And you’re not even making major profits here, you
know?

**What is your deepest, what is your deepest concern with what’s gonna happen
with the process?**

That they’re gonna throw us out, because we didn’t go for the bays.

**Um, as a female Trader, do you feel any significance in the fact that you’re a
woman here trading?**

You know I would say in this Town Centre there’s so much woman trading. If the
husband can’t bring anything in, the woman is left. And if you look around the Town
Centre, there is so much woman trading here. You know? The woman will always
see to it, you know? The mother also, she will see to it that you would have
something, always make a way for it. I mean as you look around here now a days, I
think womanpower. There’s a lot of womanpower. The men is not that powerful
anymore. And it’s growing.

**How do you feel that you’re treated as a woman Trader? A female Trader.**

I’m quite fine because I stand my ground here. This is amongst the Traders. But I
mean if you go up, shew.

**Um, can you give me a little history that you know about the Town Centre?
History of the Centre, how is started, how the Traders started here.**

Um, most of us was work, we worked, you know, um, where the cake stand is?

**Mmmmm.**

A lot of them, or us, we were trading there on that place. And you go up to the, up
to the bridge, and on the bridge, most of the Traders come from that side. Neh? And
then afterwards we start moving out and coming into the lanes here. And then, the,
the law enforcement would come and move us again.

**Did they ever evict you completely? Take your stuff away?**

No, you pack it up quickly before they come. But law enforcement came in quite a
number of times and then I, then I moved and I moved here. So they didn’t, didn’t
want us standing here, then I moved there, then they moved me there, then I moved
back here again, cause they cleaned the house every time out. And, um, when they
would move me I tell them like you know, I built up my clientele, you’re not gonna
give me a piece of bread, you’re getting a salary at the end of the month, so I’m
trying to earn my living and I'm just gonna stand here. So while I stood up against a lot of law enforcement officers already, I've had my fair share already.

**Yeah, so you've –**
I mean a lot a, a lot of traders got fines. They removed my structure. The city council when one of the officials said you know, they were gonna leave it, then David (Mganga) was still in the Town Centre, I was um, I was his committee at that time and then, um, they said they weren't gonna move it and then they removed my structure and they billed me 10,000 Rand, the City.

**Wow.**
For removing my structure. But, at that point in time, they told me ‘No, it's fine, they're not gonna.’ And so I said ‘Can I just put’, so they said ‘Yes.’ And then I fought them and eventually they squashed it after some time of angry business.

**And you'll, you've been here though for 19 years?**
Yeah.

**So they haven't moved you since?**
No. You see I was trading up there and more and more Traders came in and then, because I'm always on the corner, then they moved me more out, because I was facing that side, like you know. And then they moved so up there, so eventually I came to stand like this, because more and more Traders came and I never like to stand in the middle because I've always got like miscellaneous stuff, then my stock increases for Christmas, and then...

**With, uh, you know what, I heard that with the permit system they're gonna make so that you can only sell one thing the whole time? Is that true or no?**
I didn't read the whole permit.

**Maybe not. I was just, I think we were, they were just talking about, you know, people can't change their –**
But I think I heard because this girl said if you're fruit and veg, why can't you sell something else?

**Okay, so, but you're in a separate category. Like with you having seasonal stuff it's ok?**
Yeah you can, I'm not gonna change, not for anybody. Because you know why? They bias themselves. Their people on that committee is selling food, they selling clothing also now, does that play? I mean is that the same thing? So when we sell Valentine then they also wanna see Valentine and so like what's up with them?

**Yeah. Um, So I guess that's it. I think I just wondering if you have anything else you wanted to tell me outta the, any other questions you wanted to answer again?**
What have you got to answer now?

**No, that's all, that's all the questions I have for now. So that's, that's it.**
If you think of something then just ask me.

**Okay, yeah.**
Yeah, but here, this, this, I think this is a complete injustice that is being done to us here. Because they never, you know? The same, how can you have the same people on the same committee? And this is like never, um, new elections done in over, almost over 15 years. That is ridiculous. And how, I mean council is been dealing with the same people and they know that no elections is done. And also, what I also
want to tell you is Mr. Brinkus. Whenever he used to go into city council meetings, he used to say that people if they grow, you must leave them to expand because you don’t, that is the way their household grows. So you cannot marginalize them. Why is he allowing the marginalized, why is he allowing us to be marginalized now, hey? I don’t think it’s on. Why, why didn’t he fight for the Traders now? And now they’ve got small kiosks and he al-, always used to say that there should be, um, kiosks available for storage for the fruit and veg Traders. What happened to it now? There’s no storage for fruit and veg Traders. How must they cart it up, up and down every, some of them hasn’t got, um, vehicles.

**Who is he?**
He’s the chairperson of the umbrella body and of the steering committee.

**Um, how long have you been a member of CHATA?**
Since last year.

**Um, why did you join?**
I joined because I was not happy with the way they were doing things. I can’t understand why they going to meetings *every* week and *every* month with council and don’t filter anything down to the Trader. That is not on. And I don’t understand how they can make decisions without taking any mandate from the Traders. Why they making decisions on our behalf and say they representing us? If you are representing us, you were elected by us, so then you must come down to ground level. Why don’t you do that? Why are they all just keeping everything there? You know we didn’t know about the business plan. And when I ask the city officials why didn’t they tell us about it, what was their response to me? ‘You not there on top.’ That’s what they answered to me. So the city officials know that everything that they do is not right.

**Um, but you feel like, what has CHATA been able to do for the Traders?**
You know, at least I know that she’s trying to fight for a just cause for the Trader and not against the Trader. And at least she’s not trying to sell us out, man, without us knowing anything. She comes to us and she goes to each and every Trader. If she can’t make a pamphlet, she goes and she tells each and every Trader, ‘Listen here, this is what is happening,’ you know? ‘This is how far we are now.’ They didn’t do that, they didn’t even try and call meetings and tell us, ‘Listen here, this, or tell us here’s a pamphlet, this is what we are doing and we are gonna sign on your behalf.’ I mean let us know, don’t do things without us knowing. At least I mean she’s trying her utmost, I’ve seen that of her.

**Okay, Thank you so much [Trader 3].**
Pleasure.

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**Second Interview/Talk with Trader 3 on same day**

**Why, why do you think the city is doing the allocation, or the reallocation process?**
The reallocation process? It’s for the 2010, for 2010 happening here. So this is, when they upgrade and they do the reallocation, right? then this, they gonna, they gonna
like try and make it nice so with the 2010 happening, they will, private investors will be coming in to the Centre, not into the city. So if it looks good to them, then obviously in, say a couple a years, they gonna privatize everything like they are doing currently. And then we are gonna lose out, it’s not gonna be for, for the, the benefit of the Traders, for the benefit of the city.

**Okay.**

Obviously. They’re not gonna upgrade for us. And not in this area. So they have got an ul-, ulterior motive. Capitalism must go on. The mayor. Capitalism, I mean this is all for Capitalism, alright? When you gonna get people in, there is, investors is gonna come in next year, you know with the 2010, definitely.

**Okay, that’s one question I didn’t ask you.**