



PHINDULO MPHOSHOMALI
AFS5106W Minor Dissertation

Exploring the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors, and the strategies they use to sustain a living, in a particular South African peri-urban context, Muswodi Dipeni

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EXPLORING THE FORMS OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN STREET VENDORS AND THE STRATEGIES THEY USE TO SUSTAIN A LIVING, IN A PARTICULAR SOUTH AFRICAN PERI-URBAN CONTEXT, MUSWODI DIPENI.

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	6
Acknowledgements	7
Abstract.....	8
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	9
Summary and Organization of the Research	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
Introduction	12
Feminist Economic Ideas About Informal Trade	13-16
Theorizing Street Vending	16-18
Gender and Street Vending	18-19
Research on the Shape of Women Street Vendors' Lives	20-22
Violence	22-24
Research Question	24
Conclusion	25
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN	
Introduction	26-27
Research Design	27-28
Positionality	28-30
Ethics	30-33
Data Collection	33-36
Data Analysis	36-37
Participants and Context	37-39
Conclusion and Limitations	39-40

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS PART ONE: Livelihoods and Gender Dynamics

Livelihoods	41
Economic Activities.....	41-46
*Goods Traded	
*Trade Management	
*Product Pricing	
Domestic Duties and Marketplace Duties Balance.....	44-45
Working Conditions	45-46
Gender Dynamics	46-47
Division of Labour and Gender Roles.....	47-48
Access to Resources.....	48
Vulnerability to Social Conventions	48-49

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS PART TWO: Diverse Forms of Violence and Coping Strategies

Diverse Forms of Violence	50
Physical Violence.....	50-51
Economic Violence.....	52-53
Emotional Violence.....	53-54
Customer-Based Violence.....	54-55
Structural Violence.....	55-57
Coping Strategies	57
Solidarity.....	57
Resistance to Economic Instability.....	58
Resistance to Customer-Based Violence.....	58-59

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Introduction	60
Diverse Forms of Violence That Women Street Vendors Experience.....	60-65
Gender Influence on Violence.....	66-68
Impact on Economic Activities and Livelihoods.....	68-69
Coping Strategies to Sustain Their Livelihoods.....	69-70
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS	71-73
REFERENCE LIST	74-76
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Consent Form	77-79
Appendix B: Interview Guide	80-81
Appendix C: Table 1: Research Participants	82-84
Appendix D: Images.....	86

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I am dedicating this research to myself. I worked very hard to get to this point. I also want to dedicate this research to all women street vendors; your hard work and experiences are valued, and I see you all. Continue to do your best to improve your livelihoods. To my mother, who raised my siblings and me with the money she made as a street vendor, thank you for taking the lead and showing us that we should not wait on the government or formal sector to make a leaving, I am dedicating this research to you, I honour you and the works you have to sustain your family.

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This research has taught me to appreciate the gift of life; a lot was going on throughout the process of working on this research, but above that, I went through I saw my Lord Jesus Christ holding my hand and blessing me with the gift of life to push through to the finish line. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being by my side when I was just by myself. The assistance and efforts of numerous people and organizations were essential to the success of this research. My sincere gratitude goes out first and foremost to the women street vendors of Muswodi Dipeni, who freely offered their stories and thoughts despite the difficulties they encountered. Their resilience and determination are the heart of my research. To my supervisor, Prof Jane Bennett, I appreciate all that you have done for me. Your insightful feedback and profound knowledge have profoundly shaped this research. Thank you for believing in me and for being part of my journey. I would love to honour and appreciate every member of my family for always believing in me and cheering me on. To my friends, thank you for being my pillars of strength, for your wise words, and for the countless moments of joy and laughter that kept me grounded. This accomplishment would not have been possible without each one of you. I deeply appreciate your presence in my life and for sharing this journey with me.

ABSTRACT

This research sought to explore the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors and the strategies they use to sustain a living, in a particular South African peri-urban context, Muswodi Dipeni. The research used a qualitative method to explore the forms of violence experienced by the participants who classify themselves as women street vendors. I worked with twelve women street vendor participants who were sampled through non-probability sampling, using semi-structured interviews to collect data. I employed a thematic analysis approach to analyse the data. In addition to highlighting the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors, the study sought to further the feminist discourse on the informal sector and contribute to the exploration of gender dynamics in street trading. Through the use of qualitative methods, the results showed that women street vendors deal with diverse forms of violence daily, including physical, emotional, economic, customer-based violence, and structural violence. The findings showed that there is an intersection among women's experiences of violence, gender, economic standing, and geographic location, suggesting that these experiences are not solely a result of their informal activities. Regardless of the obstacles that cloud street vending and women's street vendors, many rely on street vending to generate income and maintain the growth of their families. The research findings revealed that to deal with the obstacle of safety and security, women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni have built solidarity groups as a tactic that improves their safety and security. This research not only fills the knowledge gap about the multifaceted nature of violence that women street vendors are exposed to, but it also contributes to the broader discourse on gender dynamics and informal work.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Street vending forms a large part of informal economic activities, and it plays a significant role in alleviating poverty and creating employment for those struggling to get jobs in the formal sector (Mlambo, 2021:233). Although street vending plays a significant role in alleviating poverty and unemployment, the informal sector is clouded with violence that takes different shapes and forms, which exacerbates the marginalization of women street vendors (Mlambo, 2021:233). The marginalization of women street vendors is made worse by the patriarchal structures inherent in the socio-economic landscape of South African peri-urban areas. Social marginalization, gender-based violence, and economic exploitation are structural problems that require detailed exploration (Lund, 2017:11). By exploring the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in a particular South African peri-urban context, Muswodi Dipeni, and the strategies they draw on to sustain a living, this research aims to deepen feminist thinking on the intersection of informal labour, gender dynamics, and class. This matters as most South African people, especially women, are encouraged to be self-employed, and as I will show in my literature review, there is not much contemporary and contextualized research on the meaning of this. The objectives of this research are to contribute to feminist research on the impact of working in the informal sector for women, explore the gender dynamics involved in street trading for women as a specific site of informal labour, explore the nature and meaning of violence as one facet of gender dynamics women street traders and lastly to analyze the strategies women street vendors employ to negotiate and resist violence.

As a researcher deeply engaged in feminist economics, my interest in the informal economy, particularly street trading, is both scholarly and personal. Growing up in communities where street vending was a common livelihood, I witnessed firsthand the resilience and resourcefulness of women who navigated this challenging sector. I observed firsthand the resourcefulness of my mother, who raised seven children through street vending. These experiences have profoundly influenced my awareness of the vital function that street vending serves in offering financial assistance to individuals and families. I have come to appreciate not only the entrepreneurial spirit of street vendors but also the distinctive circumstances that women vendors face in this environment. They often navigate diverse societal and cultural dynamics while working to establish their businesses, requiring resilience and ingenuity. This has deepened my awareness of how street vending can be a vital source of income and

empowerment, particularly for women who may have limited opportunities in more traditional employment sectors.

Street vending is a significant part of my family's history and present. My sisters continue to be involved in street vending, with some balancing it alongside formal employment. This personal connection to street trading underscores the gendered dynamics at play and fuels my commitment as a researcher. I entered the research space as both a researcher and a street vendor. This dual perspective allows me to explore and address the structural issues of social marginalization, gender-based violence, and economic exploitation from both an academic and lived experience standpoint.

My interest in looking at diverse forms of violence faced by women street vendors was sparked by the substantial presence of women in the informal sector and by the reality that feminist research has a long history of trying to understand the meaning of violences influenced by gender dynamics. Such research usually concentrates on questions of violences within the home and the formal workspace or institution. My research argues that being gendered as a woman street vendor may well entail the experiences of violence and takes the argument within the feminist economic theory that informal and reproductive economies are as vital to national economic health as labour in the formal productive sectors (Imam, Sow and Mama, 1997:7).

Summary and Organization of the Research

This research is structured into several chapters, each building on the previous to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences I heard about from women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni. The first chapter of the research, called "Introduction," provides the crucial motivation behind the research topic and gives me a space as the researcher to locate myself as a researcher with particular interests. The second chapter of the research, titled "Literature Review and Theoretical Framework," focused on reviewing feminist literature on informal trading, gendered cultures within informal trading, and violences experienced by women informal traders. Feminist economic theory will also be presented, this section will encompass aspects of feminist economic theory on the importance of informal labour, an approach to understanding violence as gendered, and the importance of researching the meaning of labour as understood by women themselves. In the third chapter, "Methodology and Research Design," I explain my approach to qualitative research to explore the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni, and this chapter will argue for the importance of using qualitative research within feminist research. The chapter will explain

what African feminism brings to the question of methodology and highlight the significance of positionality, ethics, and language in African feminist studies. I have organized the findings into two chapters (chapters four and five). The conversation in chapter four will centre on the themes of “Livelihoods” and “Gender Dynamics.” Experientially, and as my discussion chapter will explore, these two themes intersect with intimacy and create the ground from which the understanding of “violence” in my participants’ lives occurs. The conversation in chapter five will centre on themes of “Diverse forms of violence” and “Coping strategies.” The analysis here highlights the diverse forms of violence the women street vendors in Muswodi Dipen speak of experiencing, and the chapter includes what they say collectively about coping strategies to defy these violences and sustain their livelihoods. Chapter six of the research titled “Discussion” focuses on discussing thematic analysis findings through the literature reviewed in Chapter Two provides an interpretation of the analysis findings and highlights the research gaps identified. The concluding chapter titled “Conclusion and Limitation” goes back to the introduction and reviews the achievements and limitations of the research outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The primary emphasis of research into the informal economy has been on examining the significant role that informal economies play in sustaining livelihoods, particularly for those who are impoverished, as well as the challenging circumstances faced by informal economy workers, including traders (Mlambo, 2021:235). This research aims to move away from looking at multiple experiences at once and specifically focus on the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors. As my review will suggest, the question of what constitutes “violence” within an economic zone already vulnerable to marginalization is an interesting one, and although all traders, regardless of gender, may experience structural abuse, I have chosen to focus on women street vendors and the forms of violence they have experienced because the literature suggests that being gendered as a woman exposes women traders to very specific and interlocking experience of violence. The review of literature concentrated on examining prior studies conducted by other researchers concerning matters relevant to the experiences of street vendors. Theoretically, as this review will profile, it has been a feminist economic analysis that acknowledges the significant role played by informal economies in reducing poverty, especially in developing countries and the lives of economically marginalized women (Makgetla, 2020:30), and this analysis contributed to the theoretical platform justifying my research focus.

The literature on several important topics related to the informal sector will be reviewed to explain the arguments my research needs to recognize to formulate and ground my research focus. In the first place, because feminist economic theory understands the importance of the links between gender, informal and reproductive labour, I review aspects of this robust literature to place the economic activity of women in the informal sector within a larger structural framework. Secondly, studies on gender and street vending will draw attention to the situations and difficulties women vendors face in this context by highlighting the aspects of their vending activities. Finally, I will examine studies on gender-based violence in street trading to suggest areas in which my research can develop and strengthen what previous researchers have uncovered.

Feminist economic ideas about informal trade

Agenjo-Calderón and Gálvez-Muñoz (2019:139) describe feminist economic theory as an ethical and political framework designed for social change and the establishment of an economy that emphasizes justice and equality. This indicates that meaningful societal transformation depends on a deep understanding of justice and the advancement of equality, ultimately benefiting everyone. The central aim of feminist economics, as highlighted by Agenjo-Calderón and Gálvez-Muñoz (2019:139), is to critically examine and challenge simplistic, hierarchical, and discriminatory economic concepts, striving to replace them with a fresh economic viewpoint that focuses more on people's daily lives and re-evaluates what is considered "value," especially in the context of reproductive contributions. Therefore, exploring the everyday experiences of women vendors becomes a vital research focus.

Feminist economic analysis offers a critical perspective for examining economic transactions and policies, emphasizing the importance of gender as a primary analytical framework. This approach highlights the gender blindness prevalent in mainstream macroeconomics and how the absence of a gender lens has led to the implementation of policies and strategies that continue to marginalize women, particularly those from impoverished regions (Elson, 2004:1). Mhone's contribution to the *Iman, Mama, and Sow* collection (Imam, Sow, and Mama, 1997:7) delves into the systemic disparities within African economies, revealing how gender shapes access to opportunities and resources. Mhone emphasized that the informal sector, where a significant number of women are employed, is often overlooked by economic policies. To develop more inclusive economic plans, Mhone (Imam, Sow, and Mama, 1997:7) argued that it is crucial to recognize the contributions of women working in the informal sector. Furthermore, Mhone (Imam, Sow, and Mama, 1997:7) asserted that a more nuanced understanding of economic engagement is required—one that takes into account the traditional roles women occupy both at home and in the marketplace.

Feminist theory is essential to this research as it offers insights into the structural issues that lead to the marginalization and vulnerabilities of women in the informal economy. This theory highlights how gender dynamics intersect with economic factors, revealing systemic inequalities and barriers such as limited access to resources and protections. By focusing on women's experiences, feminist theory underscores the need for inclusive policies that address the challenges they face in these often-overlooked labour markets. Feminist economic ideas have advocated for the rectifying of the gender bias that exists in the economic sector and

policy development programs by ensuring that government budgets and policies address gender gaps, promoting economic justice and social equality (Elson, 2016:28). Although this strategy is critical for assisting women in the informal economy by acknowledging their achievements and providing the resources and safeguards their needs it is equally important to acknowledge that the existence of policies that specifically focus on dealing with gender imbalance at economic development is a great example of the existence of costly mistake which excluded women from economic development. Makgetla (2020:4) revealed that “In deeply unequal societies, governments find it difficult to develop strong coalitions to support development strategies.” It is challenging to garner unanimity in support of development programs since the rich and the poor have different objectives. The needs of underprivileged communities are frequently neglected since the wealthy have more authority (Makgetla, 2020:4).

The existence of the exclusionary system within the economic sector has created a system that guarantees highly unequal incomes and unfair access to jobs, resulting in the marginalized group suffering economic marginalization (Makgetla,2020:30). Moreover, the persistent social and economic inequality is fuelled by the positions they occupy in society that are determined by the access they have to opportunities and resources (Meyiwa et al., 2024:163). Women are expected to occupy positions of providing care and performing unpaid labour. According to feminist economic theories, care is a type of reproductive labour that is essential to society's survival and procreation (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9).

Reproductive labour encompasses essential tasks vital for the health and maintenance of the workforce, yet it is often undervalued and overlooked. This includes childcare, which involves nurturing and educating children; elder care, which supports ageing family members; and housework, focused on daily household management. As noted by Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe (2018:9), these responsibilities are crucial for society's functioning but typically remain unrecognized and uncompensated, leading to systemic inequalities, particularly affecting women. Recognizing the value of reproductive labour allows for a better understanding of its impact on families, communities, and the economy. In light of this, feminist economic analyses explore the gender-based gaps that exist in the workplace. An important factor is the gendering of care employment, which limits women's chances in other economic sectors and reinforces traditional gender roles by assigning care roles mostly to women (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9). Due to the gender segregation of labour, women are overrepresented in care-related occupations including nursing, teaching, childcare, catering and informal market which are

frequently underappreciated and paid less than their male counterparts (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9). Feminist economic theory viewpoints offer important insights into how modern economic models frequently ignore and take advantage of women's low-wage labour and unpaid caregiving work (Kelleher, 2020:3). These models have historically placed a higher priority on productivity and profit maximization than they do on the important contributions women contribute to the economy, especially in caregiving responsibilities like childrearing, elder care, and household upkeep, which are usually unpaid and underappreciated (Kelleher, 2020:16). Because it upholds a system in which women's labour is either unseen or underpaid, this oversight contributes to gender inequality by limiting women's financial freedom and fostering economic reliance (Kelleher, 2020:16). In addition, the focus on low-wage labour frequently results in exploitation across a range of industries, where women are commonly employed in roles with low compensation, unfavourable working conditions, and no job security (Kelleher, 2020:8). Feminist economists respond by promoting gender-just macroeconomic policies that aim to fairly divide caregiving duties between gender while simultaneously acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of women in the official and informal economy. To support caregivers and guarantee that women's labour is fairly acknowledged and compensated, measures like paid family leave, subsidized childcare, and liveable wages must be put into place (Kelleher, 2020:7).

In addition, the analyses encompass gender-sensitive assessments of paid care employment, particularly within fields such as social services and health. Occupations like nursing and childcare, which are predominantly staffed by women, not only face systemic undervaluation but are also characterized by persistent underpayment and limited opportunities for professional advancement and recognition (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9). This systematic undervaluation is further emphasized by feminist economists, who argue that the lack of recognition for unpaid care labour significantly hinders social and economic progress. They contend that this dynamic perpetuates gender disparities by failing to acknowledge the critical contributions of care work to society and the economy, ultimately reinforcing existing inequalities (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9).

Unpaid reproductive labour has been a significant concern for feminist economics, particularly in the context of household analysis. This collection of studies highlights the enormous economic importance of activities traditionally classified as "women's work," such as food preparation, laundry, and caregiving for family (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9). Feminist economists contend that unpaid care work is an important component of the informal sector

and ought to be acknowledged as such, in contrast to neoclassical economics' tendency to see these activities as pre- or extra-economic (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9). By incorporating unpaid reproductive labour into the broader context of economic activity, feminist economic studies challenge traditional economic models. This approach emphasizes the crucial role these activities play in maintaining the sustainability and smooth functioning of the economy, rather than merely labeling them as household chores. By recognizing unpaid care work as a legitimate form of economic activity, a more inclusive and practical perspective on economic productivity emerges (Folbre, 2006:190).

To demonstrate the macroeconomic importance of unpaid reproductive labour, time-budget studies have proven to be crucial. These studies highlight the significance of the substantial amount of time that women dedicate to unpaid caregiving and its impact on their participation in the formal workforce, as well as their unrecognised economic contributions. The results of these studies reveal that unpaid reproductive labour is a vital element with significant macroeconomic ramifications, particularly in addressing gender inequality, rather than merely being an analytical nuance (Folbre, 2006:190). To resolve the gender gap, it is essential to analyse unpaid reproductive labour. Feminist economists advocate for legislation that acknowledges and rewards caregiving by emphasising the economic value of this labour. This includes promoting childcare assistance, social safety nets, and a more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities between genders. These policies aim to reduce the economic inequalities that women face and to foster a fairer and more just economic structure.

Theorizing Street vending

A significant amount of research investigates the various types of informal labour in different contexts and regions. As per Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2015), individuals are involved in informal economic activities if they lack a formal written employment contract. This category encompasses a wide array of workers, including casual laborers, street vendors, and domestic workers, who frequently operate without the protections or recognition offered by formal employment. A key feature of informal work is the absence of required tax registrations, such as for income tax and value-added tax (Stats SA, 2015). This lack of registration deepens their exclusion from the formal economy, restricting their economic engagement and access to government services. Additionally, informal workers generally do not receive important benefits from their employers, which may include retirement contributions, health insurance, and paid leave (Stats SA, 2015). The lack of these benefits puts informal workers at a

considerable disadvantage, as they often face financial insecurity and limited access to vital services. This precarious situation highlights the vulnerabilities faced by those in the informal sector, where job stability is minimal, and conditions can be unpredictable. The challenges inherent in informal work underscore the need for policy interventions that address these inequalities, promote fair labour practices, and enhance the overall welfare of these workers, who play a crucial role in many economies yet remain largely unprotected.

Bromley (2000:1) defines street vending as “the act of selling goods and services at retail or wholesale in public spaces such as streets, avenues, and boulevards.” This definition underscores the versatility of street vending, highlighting that vendors can operate from a multitude of locations and offer a broad array of products and services, ranging from food items to handcrafted goods. Unlike traditional retail environments, street vending does not solely rely on established markets, spaza shops, supermarkets, or food trucks; it thrives in various public venues, including parks, plazas, and busy sidewalks, where foot traffic is abundant.

For many individuals, street vending transcends mere economic survival; it embodies a social lifestyle, fostering community connections and cultural expression. Street vendors often become integral parts of the neighbourhoods they serve, creating vibrant public spaces that reflect the diverse tastes and needs of the community. This dynamic form of entrepreneurship is not limited by the constraints typically faced by formal businesses, such as high startup costs or lengthy registration processes. Consequently, street vending can occur in nearly any location, providing an accessible means of livelihood for countless people (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2009:83).

Abbot and Sotelo (2014:12) highlight that street vendors are participants in what is often referred to as the “invisible economy,” thereby indirectly contributing to a significant portion of the overall national economy. The benefits of street vending extend beyond the national economy; for instance, it provides the urban poor with access to affordable food and goods. Despite its importance and economic impact, government officials often overlook street vending. Sverdlik (2019:31) notes, “Street trading can create vital livelihoods, especially for women, but these providers are usually ignored and remain invisible. Informal workers, along with their livelihoods, tend to be excluded from city planning and local economic development.” This suggests that although street vending significantly improves lives and supports families, street vendors face challenges and exclusion from economic development initiatives, which ultimately jeopardizes their livelihoods (Sverdlik, 2019:31).

While street vending significantly contributes to alleviating poverty and reducing unemployment, vendors encounter considerable challenges from authorities, customers, and even from one another (Mlambo, 2021:233). Many countries have a long history of regulating the activities of street vendors, with diverse municipal, local, and national laws that pertain to street vending in general or specifically target street vendors (Bromley, 2000:1). In Africa, street vending is prevalent across numerous nations. According to Mlambo (2021:235), “street vending is found throughout Zimbabwe where vendors sell vegetables, fruits, cigarettes, airtime, confectioneries, and many other commodities.”

Street vending in Africa extends beyond Zimbabwe; as Siqwana-Ndulo (2007:12) pointed out, women from historically underprivileged backgrounds are significantly represented in South Africa's street vending sector. The two countries mentioned serve as just a small example of the widespread presence of street vending across the continent. They are highlighted together due to their geographical proximity, as many individuals from Zimbabwe migrate to South Africa to engage in vending, which underscores the limited economic development in the region. A review of the literature reveals a primary focus on the significance of street vending. While this body of work emphasizes the crucial role street vending plays in diverse economies, it is important to note that the literature on policies governing the management and regulation of street trading in different contexts is not included in this review. This omission is deliberate, as it falls outside the primary objectives of this research.

Gender and street vending

The Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL, 2020:17) emphasizes that in many nations where gender-disaggregated data is available, women are significantly more likely than men to find employment in informal settings. This trend is particularly pronounced in the realm of street trading, where a considerable number of vendors across Africa are women. For instance, statistics reveal that approximately 68% of women in South Africa, 88% in Ghana, and 63% in Kenya engage in work within the informal economy. While these figures were reported five years ago, their relevance persists in today's socio-economic environment and illustrates a continued trend. The high prevalence of women participating in street trading can be attributed to numerous intersecting forms of discrimination. These include factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and disability, which often compound the challenges faced by women in seeking formal employment opportunities. Additionally, this situation reflects the broader phenomenon of the feminization of poverty, whereby women, particularly from marginalized

communities, are disproportionately affected by economic instability and limited access to resources. Consequently, these factors contribute to a heightened representation of vulnerable groups within the informal economy, perpetuating cycles of economic disadvantage (CWGL, 2020:17).

Mlambo (2021:235) argues that women are often compelled to work in informal enterprises, such as street vending, due to “poverty, unemployment, and limitations on their access to and control over the means of production.” This suggests that the means of production are gendered, with most formal sector jobs predominantly reserved for men, leading many women to turn to informal trading as a means of survival. The overrepresentation of women in informal economic activities is not solely a South African concern; Mlambo’s study (2021:235) reveals that “In Zimbabwe, many of the street vendors are women and children.” Consequently, women and children engaged in street trading face unique challenges, given their predominance in this sector. While it is crucial to recognize that street vending also involves men, it is important to acknowledge that the difficulties encountered by women differ significantly from those faced by men (Mlambo, 2021:235).

Legodi and Kanjere (2015:66) highlight the significant challenges faced by women in the realm of street trading, particularly due to restrictive municipal by-laws that hinder the ability of survivalist traders to engage effectively in their work. These regulations often lead to the forced confiscation of goods, a practice that disproportionately impacts women. This demographic is frequently perceived as softer targets by law enforcement officers and other stakeholders, leading to increased vulnerability. These dynamic raises serious concerns about the exploitation of these women, who are striving to support themselves and their families through informal commerce.

In addition, Mlambo (2021:235) provides further context by noting that while police actions do not show an inherent bias towards targeting either men or women vendors, the reality is that women often face a higher frequency of police raids. This can be attributed to their typically slower response times when confronted by law enforcement, which can result from a variety of factors, including socio-economic pressures and the precarious nature of their livelihoods. Both observations reveal a systemic issue within law enforcement practices, indicating a need for more equitable treatment of all street traders to help foster a more supportive environment for women entrepreneurs.

Research on the shape of women street vendors' lives

One significant concern highlighted by scholars regarding street vendors is the challenges faced by women vendors in balancing household responsibilities with their work. Sverdlik (2019:31) notes that it is difficult for women traders to earn sufficient income to hire domestic help due to their limited education and the low earnings associated with street trading. While I concur with Sverdlik's viewpoint, I would emphasize that unemployment and the necessity to support loved ones are more pressing factors driving individuals into the informal sector than merely a lack of education (Mlambo, 2021:237). The high unemployment rate in the formal sector often compels individuals to start their businesses (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:60). The simultaneous need for domestic assistance and financial support places a considerable physical and emotional burden on traders, as it requires them to dedicate hours to caring for others while grappling with fatigue (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:62). In their study, Legodi and Kanjere (2015:62) highlight the significant stress experienced by women street vendors, primarily stemming from the combination of long working hours and the challenges of fulfilling family responsibilities once their workday ends. These women often find themselves in a precarious balancing act, striving to keep their businesses viable while simultaneously managing household duties such as caregiving, cooking, and cleaning. This dual burden not only affects their mental and physical health but also limits their ability to invest time and resources into their businesses, which can jeopardize their financial stability. Such circumstances underscore the urgent need for supportive measures that address both the professional and personal challenges faced by these vendors.

Sverdlik (2019:31) noted that “vending near home can offer substantial advantages to women, as it allows them to incur lower childcare and transportation costs; they can more effectively balance their livelihoods with household responsibilities.” This highlights how women can integrate their street vending activities with domestic duties, enabling them to care for their families while conducting business close to home. In a comprehensive study conducted by Mlambo (2021:235), it was revealed that vendors who identify as women encounter a unique set of challenges that often surpass those faced by their counterparts. The research highlights the difficulties these individuals experience in balancing their roles as caregivers and entrepreneurs (Mlambo, 2021:235). Many of them manage their businesses while simultaneously caring for their infants, bringing their babies along to markets (Mlambo, 2021:235). This not only complicates their selling experience but also adds layers of stress as they strive to meet both their family's needs and their commercial goals (Mlambo, 2021:235).

Additionally, some vendors are pregnant, further intensifying the physical and emotional demands of their work (Mlambo, 2021:235). This situation underscores the need for targeted support and resources to assist individuals in overcoming the barriers they face in the marketplace.

Street vendors often find themselves facing harassment from diverse sources, including government officials, customers, and fellow traders (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:64). The harassment experienced by these traders manifests in numerous ways, as they encounter diverse challenges and difficulties. According to Legodi and Kanjere (2015:64), “the relationship between the traders and police is usually strained, especially because law enforcement agents are perceived as antagonistic toward the informal trading sector.” This implies that traders must navigate interactions with the police in their daily operations, as they are often viewed as ungovernable individuals whose activities are believed to cause disorder in the streets (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:64).

Furthermore, Legodi and Kanjere (2015:64) argue that street vendors are frequently misunderstood and undervalued, with persistent negative stereotypes and myths surrounding their work. Their operations are often considered messy due to the lack of formalization and taxation by the government (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:64). The situation is exacerbated by governmental actions and municipal policies, which often favour the eviction of street vendors to create cleaner, emptier streets, rather than addressing their livelihoods and seeking more effective and inclusive regulatory solutions (Mlambo, 2021:238).

Traders often find themselves in a position where they are required to pay for participating in street vending, even though such payments are not legally mandated. Those who refuse to pay risk being forcefully removed from their selling locations. According to Chen (2016:23), this act of forced removal can be seen as a means of excluding vendors from the economy, emphasizing that no amount of social or financial inclusion can offset the damage inflicted on one’s livelihood when it is undermined or destroyed. The consequences of these forced removals are significant, as they sever traders from their primary source of income. Alarmingly, it is government agencies that often perpetrate this pain and destruction, rather than serving as protectors of the traders (Chen, 2016:23). Additionally, as street vendors are ousted from their means of support, Mlambo (2021:236) notes that such forced removals and the accompanying acts of violence can severely impact the incomes of street vendors and the welfare of their families.

Legodi and Kanjere (2015:64) noted that one prevalent negative perception of street vending is that the government does not collect tax revenue from the informal sector to support its development or the nation's growth. As a result, these traders are seen as lacking the grounds to expect government assistance or protection. This perspective is quite alarming, especially considering that the right to protection from harm is a fundamental human right. The inadequate support from the government poses significant challenges for vendors, often leading to costly consequences in their lives as they must contend with issues of crime and theft (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:64).

The convergence of gender, race, class, and location highlights the multifaceted discrimination and marginalization that women face. Despite efforts to tackle these issues, the specific marginalization of women in the informal economy often goes unrecognized. This oversight is largely due to a broader focus on women's experiences related to domestic abuse, which tends to overlook the violence faced by women engaged in street vending. Addressing violence against women street vendors is crucial, as this sector often experiences multiple forms of violence. These acts not only affect the individuals directly involved but also have widespread repercussions on the informal economy. This disruption negatively affects the livelihoods of countless families who rely on street trading as their primary source of income. When violence occurs, it creates an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, leading to a decline in business activity, loss of income, and increased hardship for those dependent on this sector. Ultimately, these violent acts threaten the very foundation of community resilience and economic stability for many families. Recognizing and combating these issues is essential, especially given that state policies are actively committed to promoting gender equality and protecting marginalized communities.

Violence

The literature on violence against women is rich and contextually rooted in multiple zones (the home, the public, the system, and within many institutions), and it would be doing this literature an injustice to review it superficially. Bennett writes in "Circles and Circles" (FA 14, 2010) of the different research and activist understandings of the links between being gendered as "woman" and the meaning of violence and concludes that the process of gendering itself may constitute an act of violence, which then flows out into multiple different possibilities for pain, discrimination, and difficulty. Such "difficulty" is politically and economically invested in,

among other things, maintaining reproductive labour as both essential and “unpaid,” outside the value of the formal economy.

The complex violences faced by women in the informal economy has not been researched fully in the way that domestic violence, trafficking, rape, and femicide have been. My research demands that I see “violence” as an umbrella term for multiple experiences that may make traders’ lives very vulnerable. This requires imagining the violence “violence against women” as domestic abuse alongside the violence of state police who may (as reviewed above) close vending places alongside the likelihood of the theft of their goods.

Barker (2007:46) noted that “one of the most common fears for both men and women street traders is theft and criminal violence.” These issues pose significant challenges, particularly for street vendors, who often have little legal protection and must frequently fend for themselves. When considering the threats of theft and violence faced by vendors, two primary concerns arise: the safety of their well-being and the security of their goods. Traders continually face the dilemma of whether to prioritize their own safety or the preservation of their merchandise, as both are at risk while dealing with criminal elements. This predicament inevitably places them in perilous situations that can escalate to life-threatening violence (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:63).

Additionally, the problem of theft and crime puts traders at risk of enduring diverse forms of violence, including sexual, physical, emotional, economic, and structural violence. Criminals may choose to steal their resources and money or even inflict physical harm before taking what they want. According to Onyando (2015:6), sexual violence includes coercing someone into sexual activity, making unwanted physical contact, or making sexual advances without the other person's consent. It involves engaging in or attempting to engage in sexual acts without consent. Legodi and Kanjere (2015:63) noted that in a country like South Africa, which has one of the highest rates of violence, women face a significantly elevated risk of sexual assault, which can subsequently expose them to HIV/AIDS. The repercussions of sexual violence extend beyond immediate harm; it poses diverse health risks that can lead traders to abandon their businesses due to the trauma they have experienced (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:63). This examination of the informal sector aims to explore sexual violence beyond just violence within partner relationships.

Onyando (2015:6) defines physical violence as the intentional use of force that could lead to death, injury, disability, or damage. Emotional violence, as described by Onyando (2015:6),

involves actions or words aimed at subjugating victims to the abuser, leading them to doubt their abilities or viewpoints. In this study, emotional violence is examined through methods like emotional manipulation, name-calling, and threats that induce anxiety and fear to intimidate vendors. Meanwhile, economic violence is characterized by one partner intentionally restricting the other's access to financial resources (Onyando, 2015:6). This can take diverse forms, such as limiting access to bank accounts, controlling household spending, or preventing the partner from working or pursuing education (Onyando, 2015:6). Such actions can create a power imbalance within the relationship, often resulting in financial dependency and damaging the victim's sense of autonomy and self-worth (Onyando, 2015:6). The effects of this type of manipulation can significantly impact the affected partner's financial security and overall well-being in the long run (Onyando, 2015:6).

Research question

My interest in the experiences of women engaged in street vending, as well as the various forms of violence they may encounter, arises from a comprehensive exploration of three key areas of research. The first emphasizes the importance of informal trading in understanding a national economy. The second clarifies how street vending, as a form of informal business, attracts many marginalized women into the workforce. Lastly, the extensive research on gender and violence predominantly concentrates on domestic violence and intimate femicide, often neglecting the specific types of violence that women face within the informal economic sector. This context has led me to the following research question:

What are the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni, and what are the strategies they draw on to sustain a living? The research was guided by the following sub-question: What are the diverse forms of violence reported by women street vendors? How does gender shape the violence experienced by these women? How does violence impact the economic activities and livelihoods of women street vendors? Lastly, what coping strategies do women street vendors employ to sustain their livelihoods?

Conclusion

The introductory section of this chapter underscores the vital role of street vending in the informal economy, particularly in the context of South Africa. Street vending serves as a crucial source of livelihood for many individuals who may lack access to formal employment opportunities. It provides goods and services that are essential to local communities, often at affordable prices. Additionally, street vendors contribute to the vibrant, dynamic nature of

urban life while also facing challenges such as regulatory obstacles and competition. Understanding the complexities and significance of street vending is essential for grasping the broader implications of the informal economy in South Africa.

The informal economy is gendered, and one of its sectors, street trading, is dominated by women in peri-urban and poor spaces. The literature also confirms that vulnerability to violence is well known to be part of being gendered as a woman, and so, my research seeks to understand more about what the fact means in the lives of workers essential to the economy, but marginalized by poverty, race, and rarely the focus of either feminist work on violence or economic analysts. Given the literature and my own experience, it is possible that such violence could entail anything from abusive price negotiations from customers to rape early in the morning as goods are collected for sale. My research focuses on deepening feminist discourse by exploring the intricate and often challenging intersections of violence, gender dynamics, and women's engagement in the informal economy. This study seeks to explore how women navigate and theorize their experiences within this context, examining the diverse strategies they employ to address the obstacles they encounter. Additionally, the research focuses on understanding how women's lived experiences and insights can inform and enrich policy-making and activist efforts. By prioritizing these perspectives, it becomes possible to foster greater commitment to recognizing and valuing women's labour, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective interventions in their lives and communities. This study will delve into the multifaceted nature of these experiences, uncovering the nuances of struggles and resilience.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Creating and generating knowledge requires the knowledge creator to fully focus on the methods of knowledge production. This focus is essential to ensure that the well-being and expertise of the research participants are prioritized in the research process. It is also important to be transparent and theoretically clear about the methodology I used because future researchers might be interested in the same topic of study. Located as I am within the multidisciplinary terrain of African feminism; I have worked with key principles with informed feminist methodology. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:10) argued that feminist methodology is essential when it comes to the issue of creating solid and convincing data that is centred on knowledge about gender. The primary focus of contemporary feminist scholars' epistemology has evolved beyond merely addressing "the issue of positionality and the question of power imbalances between research participants and researchers"(Doucet and Mauthner, 2006:40). Doucet and Mauthner (2006:40) argue that current feminist scholarship emphasizes how power influences the process of knowledge construction and production and recognizes the importance of situational knowledge and the necessity of challenging dominant knowledge beliefs, theoretical positions developed by Sandra Harding as early as the 1990s.

Additionally, Doucet and Mauthner (2006:401) assert that feminist epistemology requires a cooperative approach, involving collaboration with study participants as allies throughout the research process. These ideas helped me to develop a strategy of visiting the marketplace daily to connect with my research allies and work alongside the vendors with their trade as I did not just view them as passive participants but as key figures within my research. While I do not include ethnography among my methods (this would have required more time than I had available), the time I spent at the trading sites strengthened my dedication to the research and helped me build relationships with the women street vendors who revealed to me their experiences.

This chapter will also include a synopsis of the techniques I employed to collect the data. I will discuss how my positionality impacted the research and reflect on how my identity as a vendor influenced my ethical values.

Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the challenges that I faced as a researcher during the data collection process and also provide solutions that I used to deal with the problems that I faced. Lastly, this section will also highlight the importance of language and interpretation in the process of data collection.

Research design

To gather insights about the types of violence faced by women street vendors, I utilized qualitative research. This approach was particularly effective in examining the experiences of these women because it allowed me to engage in informal conversations with them in their native language (Tshivenda). This enabled them to fully articulate and delve into their experiences related to their work and the violence they encountered as street vendors. Qualitative methods are especially beneficial for building trust with participants who may share challenging experiences, as they provide opportunities to listen to their stories as they unfold through thoughtful questioning and probing.

The research used the interpretive paradigm to explore forms of violence experienced by women street vendors. This paradigm allowed the participants to fully explain and describe the meaning they attach to the challenges they face as vendors, specifically looking at the violence they face. The interpretive paradigm aims to reveal and clarify the personal motivations and meanings that drive social behaviours, as explained by Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:7). This paradigm emphasizes understanding the perspectives of individuals involved in social interactions, focusing on the meanings they attribute to their experiences and actions (Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter, 2006:7). The interpretive paradigm emphasizes the importance of everyday language and expressions in understanding phenomena, focusing on the nuances of human experience and interpretation (Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter, 2006:7). This approach seeks to enhance people's understanding of the social world and the complexities of individuals' experiences (Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter, 2006:7). Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:7) argue that by emphasizing the personal narratives and meanings individuals attach to their lives, researchers can attain a deeper understanding of social interactions and the wider contexts that influence human behaviour.

Conducting qualitative research involves navigating multiple layers to understand how participants perceive their realities. My interactions with the traders, which occurred within the comfort of their work environments, enabled me to utilize a blend of interviews and participant observation. This approach allowed me to immerse myself in the vendors' daily activities and

gain insight into their business practices. Through interviews with selected participants, I not only observed their operations but also uncovered the meanings behind their methods, while also learning about their personal lives both at home and in the workplace. I dedicated significant time to being with the vendors, observing their work, and engaging in conversations within their working environment.

Recognizing that my research focus might evoke painful memories and understanding the importance of establishing strong relationships with my participants, I began by visiting the marketplace to foster connections. During these visits, I engaged in unplanned conversations that reflected the realities faced by the vendors—women who navigate the challenges of operating in the informal sector while also fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers and wives. The conversations led to a meaningful discussion among the women about their roles in society, highlighting how their trade benefits them economically while also easing the lives of people in the village. Thanks to the marketplace, villagers no longer need to travel to town for essentials like vegetables, fruits, school uniforms, and other daily necessities. By creating a space where women street vendors could speak candidly about their value, they felt empowered to share their hardships, allowing me to engage with them as research participants. This openness fostered trust regarding their experiences, paving the way for discussions about violence. As the women shared their struggles, they began to recognize and acknowledge the diverse forms of violence they had encountered.

My approach of consistently returning to the marketplace does suggest elements of ethnography; however, I would not classify this as an ethnographic study. During my months of engagement with the women street vendors, I prioritized their stories based on their perspectives and understanding, rather than relying solely on my observations. Additionally, as planned, I utilized my phone to record my thoughts and the conversations I had with the street vendors during my visits. This allowed me to track my reflections, and the emotions tied to them, enabling me to continuously reevaluate my knowledge about street vendors and avoid basing my findings solely on my prior understandings and experiences.

Positionality

Although I was entering a space I grew up in and had prior experience as a vendor, I recognized that my background did not grant me complete insight into the lives of street vendors. Additionally, despite having a mother and sister who are vendors, I cannot claim to fully

understand their experiences. This awareness allowed me to approach the interviews as a learner, ensuring that my thoughts did not overshadow the perspectives of the participants.

It is important to emphasize that entering the marketplace required me to embrace my identity as a street vendor, which is an integral part of who I am. While I have encountered diverse challenges as a vendor, recognizing that my experiences may differ from those of my participants has provided valuable insight as I navigate my research. Living as a vendor continues to offer me not only a source of income but also the opportunity to build meaningful connections with my customers.

To ensure my research achieves its intended outcomes, I practiced “knowledge reflexivity,” a concept highlighted by Caloran (2003:3) that prompts critical questions like “What do I know?” and “Why do I know that?” This reflective process encourages an examination of the origins of my knowledge and recognizes how personal biases can influence research. By engaging in knowledge reflexivity, I remain focused on generating authentic insights and can identify when my views might overshadow those of participants, ensuring their experiences are accurately represented and maintaining the integrity of the research.

Engaging in knowledge reflexivity allows researchers to acknowledge their understanding and explore how it has been shaped over time. This approach stands in contrast to ignorance, which arises when individuals fail to recognize their existing knowledge. Knowledge reflexivity plays a vital role in the research process, influencing how researchers position themselves within their work. It empowers researchers to recognize moments when their perspectives may overshadow those of the participants, encouraging a reflective practice that incorporates the insights shared by research participants (Caloran, 2003:3). To effectively engage in knowledge reflexivity, I consistently carried my phone to capture my thoughts and maintained a diary to jot down ideas that I found intriguing and pertinent to my research in the marketplace. This practice enabled me to document my reflections and trace the influences on my thinking, ensuring that my viewpoints did not overshadow those of the participants.

The way individuals are positioned in the research process requires researchers to be mindful of power dynamics. Understanding power is essential, as both the researcher and participants play important roles. It’s vital for everyone involved to be aware of their responsibilities to prevent power imbalances. The goal of the research should be to create a cooperative relationship, making clear who is responsible for different elements of the process. As I approached the research environment, I understood that my role was to engage with my

participants and conduct the interviews, while also recognizing that the participants hold the valuable knowledge I am seeking.

Positioning myself within the marketplace was a complex challenge, particularly as I initially began as a researcher. However, I quickly realized that to effectively assist my participants, I needed to adopt the identity of a street vendor. This shift required me to immerse myself in the street vending experience by actively selling products, understanding customer preferences, and mastering sales tactics. My involvement included preparing products before trading hours and managing cleanup afterward. This unexpected dual role offered valuable insights into the vendors' realities. Balancing my responsibilities as both a vendor and a researcher was essential; I had to ensure my sales activities did not compromise my objective observations. By using my vendor time as part of my research methodology, I carefully observed vendor-customer interactions, body language, and product display techniques, which deepened my understanding of marketplace dynamics while supporting my participants' businesses.

Ethics

Acknowledging the significance of catering to individuals' needs is crucial when engaging with people, making informed consent a key element of feminist research. According to McCormick (2012:24), a major ethical consideration for feminist researchers is securing informed consent. This practice arises from the ethical obligation to prioritize the well-being of research participants. As a result, a feminist researcher should thoroughly assess all ethical concerns related to the research topic before developing it (McCormick, 2012:24).

My research focused on examining the diverse forms of violence experienced by women street vendors. The core themes of my project—violence and street vending—are prominently reflected in the subject matter. This focus allowed me to engage with individuals who encounter numerous difficulties in their work. As a researcher, I recognized the importance of approaching this sensitive topic with care; when asking participants to share their past experiences as vendors, I was aware of the delicate nature of the subject. Moreover, given that my study addressed issues related to financial, emotional, physical, and sexual violence, it was crucial for me to maintain honesty with both me and my participants before obtaining their informed consent.

In order to effectively gain informed consent from the street vendors I worked with, I began by engaging them in a detailed discussion about the research. I explained the research topic, its goals, objectives, and the possible themes that might arise from their interview responses. I

also made it clear that some questions could lead to conversations about difficult experiences, reassuring them that they were not obligated to participate if they were not comfortable addressing such topics. Additionally, I highlighted that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point if they felt uneasy or triggered. I encountered five individuals who, after hearing my explanation, chose not to participate because they recognized the emotional challenges associated with it. While it was initially disheartening to face this rejection, it ultimately gave me a deeper appreciation for the participants who did choose to share their stories. Their willingness to be vulnerable and recount their experiences is something I greatly value.

Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:140) highlight the essential need to safeguard participants from any potential harm that could arise throughout the research process. This idea, referred to as the “nonmaleficence principle,” is crucial for ensuring that participants are protected from harmful or adverse conditions that could affect their well-being. As a researcher visiting the marketplace where the participants operated, I was particularly conscious of this principle. Instead of dictating how participants should manage their spaces, I chose to adopt a respectful and collaborative approach. I allowed participants to select the location for our interviews, giving them the option of their home or the marketplace. This decision was intentional, aimed at fostering a comfortable and secure environment for them, thereby reducing any risk of harm or distress during our engagement. By emphasizing their preferences and comfort, I aimed to uphold ethical research standards while building a trusting rapport with the participants.

From the very beginning of my research journey, I understood that it was essential to approach the task with a deep sense of responsibility. Recognizing the importance of understanding the potential consequences of my study was paramount before I could seek consent from participants. This was not merely an administrative step; it was a fundamental aspect of ethical research practices. This awareness stemmed from my ethical obligation to prioritize the well-being of all individuals involved. I understood that without adequately addressing participant vulnerability and formulating a thorough plan to manage any emotional distress that could arise, particularly if a participant were to experience a breakdown, I would lack the confidence to proceed with my research project. To proactively prepare for potential emotional distress, I took the initiative to organize counselling services through my church, which offers free counselling to members of the community. This resource was specifically established to provide participants with a safe and supportive environment should they need assistance.

However, I also acknowledged that not everyone may feel comfortable discussing their feelings within a church context. To address this, I sought to expand my support network by reaching out to the Muswodi Dipeni community group, an organization dedicated to providing support for individuals in diverse situations. Despite my preparations and the support services I had arranged to address potential emotional distress, none of the participants ultimately requested these resources during the research. While this outcome was unexpected, it reinforced my commitment to ethical research practices and demonstrated my readiness to support participants regarding their vulnerability should the need arise.

A major challenge I encountered during my research involved the necessity of staying alert to uphold ethical standards, especially when it came to distinguishing my role as a supporter of the participants' businesses from that of an interviewer. I was deeply aware that my assistance could inadvertently influence their responses during the interviews, and I wanted to ensure that their feedback was genuinely reflective of their experiences and opinions. To navigate this delicate balance, I adopted a deliberate approach at the start of each interview. I would carefully reiterate the details outlined in the consent form along with the research information document, ensuring that it was clear their involvement was completely voluntary, and they were not obligated to offer anything. This clarification was essential in fostering an atmosphere of trust and openness, as I aimed to eliminate any feelings of indebtedness the participants might have towards me. Moreover, I implemented regular pauses throughout the interview process to check in with the participants. I would ask them if they felt comfortable continuing to share their experiences. This practice served a dual purpose: it not only reinforced their autonomy in the discussion but also helped to ensure that they felt secure and respected throughout the interview. By giving them the opportunity to express any discomfort, I aimed to put them in control of the narrative and empower them to communicate their thoughts and feelings freely. This approach was integral to my commitment to conducting ethical and responsible research.

Working with women between the ages of 40 and 60 proved to be a complex undertaking, even though we shared the commonality of gender. I was acutely aware that their age and wealth of life experiences positioned them as significant contributors to the discussions we were having. Their perspectives were shaped by decades of wisdom and a unique understanding of diverse societal issues, making them invaluable to my research. Rather than allowing any apprehension regarding their age and influence to deter my inquiries, I actively embraced it as an advantage. I recognized that their rich backgrounds provided depth to our conversations, and their experiences could offer profound insights into the questions I sought to explore in my study.

By valuing their input and fostering an open dialogue, I aimed to enhance the knowledge production process and ensure that the findings reflected a considerate and inclusive approach to understanding the topics at hand.

Navigating the marketplace, where I encountered both familiar and unfamiliar faces, proved to be a challenge. The dynamics are complex, as no one can fully control the market; some individuals exert significant influence over others. This was particularly evident during my visit to a market that operates on a first-come, first-served basis, where early arrivals secure prime locations that attract more customers. However, this system does not always guarantee success, as some customers remain loyal to specific traders. I made sure to limit my commentary, as I wanted to avoid influencing my participants in ways that might be detrimental to them.

Data collection

The research involved twelve participants who identified as women and street vendors. This specific population group was chosen to explore the diverse forms of violence experienced by women in street vending. The age criteria for participation stipulated that all individuals had to be 36 years old or older, with the youngest participant being 40 years old. This age criteria were established to include individuals who are not minors and who are also not affiliated with any institutions, ensuring that access to participants was independent of certain organizations and that the group was unbounded by institutional control. Furthermore, the study concentrated on street vendors who operate their businesses in market spaces, such as along roadways next to schools or within schoolyards. For this project, particular attention was given to vendors located by the roadside, as they face unique interactions with a diverse group of customers. This emphasis on roadside markets proved advantageous, as the continuous flow of passersby created a substantial customer base.

I employed a non-probability sampling method to collect the data. As noted by Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006:139), non-probability sampling is characterized as “any kind of sampling where the statistical principle of randomness does not determine the selection of elements.” This means that, rather than selecting participants at random, the researcher chooses individuals based on their subjective assessment (Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006:139). While non-probability sampling can raise concerns regarding potential researcher bias due to its lack of random selection, I aimed to mitigate this issue by restricting my selection criteria to age and gender, specifically focusing on women aged 36 and older.

Qualitative researchers strive to understand emotions, experiences, social contexts, or phenomena as they occur in reality, seeking to study them within their natural environments (Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter, 2006:287). For my research project, I primarily utilized interviews for data collection, which were extremely beneficial. This method enabled me to establish a meaningful connection with my participants and understand their social positions and the significance they associate with their lives as street vendors.

In the course of the interview process, I utilized a semi-structured interview technique. This method entails preparing a list of questions beforehand to aid in collecting essential information (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021:1362). Although having predetermined questions is advantageous, participants can go beyond these inquiries; the informal nature of the conversation allows for the development of additional follow-up questions as required (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021:1362).

To prepare for the interviews, I developed a comprehensive set of questions divided into seven distinct sections. This structure aimed to ensure that I gathered data relevant to my research topic by posing relevant questions. The first section concentrated on demographic information, where participants provided details such as their names, marital status, employment status, age, family structure, gender, home language, and race. I considered these aspects crucial as they offer insights into the identity of my participants and their perspectives. The second section of the interview questions explored the background and history of participant involvement in street vending. This included inquiries about how long the participant has been operating as a street vendor and the types of goods they sell, which helped me understand the significance they attribute to their business while acknowledging the importance of their products in Muswodi Dipeni village.

The third section of the interview questions focused on how vendors navigate their family responsibilities alongside their marketplace obligations. The fourth section aimed to explore gender dynamics within the marketplace, seeking to understand how these dynamics shape the experiences of women street vendors. It also aimed to determine whether these women perceive gender as a significant factor influencing their lives both as women and as street vendors. The fifth section delved into the meanings that Muswodi Dipeni women street vendors attribute to their experiences, particularly how some of these experiences highlight the existence of violence in their lives. This section sought to gather insights into the violence they have faced and identify the perpetrators involved. Lastly, the interview concluded with questions about the

strategies employed by women to cope and sustain their livelihoods. An interview guide with questions that facilitated these discussions has been attached (Appendix B).

The interviews were organized in the following manner: After dedicating considerable time to connect with the participants and observe their vending practices at the marketplace, the participants were allowed to select the location for their interviews. Some preferred to have their interviews conducted at the marketplace after completing their daily sales, while others chose to have them at their homes. I provided this choice to respect their time as street vendors, allowing them to avoid missing crucial trading hours for the sake of my research. Additionally, this approach aimed to safeguard their privacy and mitigate any potential disruptions or losses to their business that might arise from interviewing them in front of their customers. Furthermore, Table 1 in Appendix C illustrates the diverse locations of the interviews. It also shows that most participants who identified as married preferred to be interviewed at the marketplace after their workday. When I inquired about their preference, they expressed that they felt more comfortable sharing their experiences in the marketplace, as many of these experiences were connected to their partners.

A challenge I faced while interviewing individuals at the marketplace was the necessity of remaining after others had left. Participants often expected that once the interview concluded, I would assist them in packing their products. Those without transportation anticipated that I would accompany them to their homes to help carry their items. This felt akin to a form of payment, even though it was not monetary. Furthermore, assisting one participant seemed to set a precedent, leading other participants to adopt similar expectations. Though this process was both demanding and time-consuming, it ultimately served to strengthen relationships. When I approached other participants, having previously offered assistance before and after their interviews, they became more open and trusting, sharing not only their experiences but also details about their businesses. Another challenge I encountered during my research related to my interview method was the expectation to assist participants with the sale of their goods. Although I had not promised to provide financial compensation, declining their requests for help was difficult. To navigate this challenge effectively, I offered my assistance during the early hours of their business operations, helping them set up their markets and arrange their products on display. This approach allowed me to dedicate the remaining hours of the day to my primary objective: collecting data.

Given that the research was conducted in Muswodi Dipeni, where the predominant population consists of Venda-speaking individuals, I utilized Tshivenda as the primary language for interviewing participants. The participants I engaged with were all Tshivenda speakers. According to Temple and Edward (2002:3), language transcends its role as a mere technical tool for expressing ideas or facilitating communication. Temple and Edward (2002:3) argue that language plays a crucial role in expressing values, beliefs, and conceptual frameworks. This viewpoint underscores that researchers cannot separate themselves from the interpretations people attach to language, as these interpretations significantly impact individuals' self-identity (Temple and Edward, 2002:3). To ensure participants fully understood the project, I read the research information document and consent form in both English and Tshivenda. Including the English version was essential to represent both the language being studied and the language used to present the collected data. The interviews were subsequently transcribed in English. This approach raised an important consideration: certain words used by participants in Tshivenda do not have direct equivalents in English. Consequently, I had to creatively preserve these terms in their original form to maintain the intended meanings.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves identifying, examining, and reporting patterns or themes within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2012:57). This research benefits from thematic analysis because this approach accommodates rich, detailed, and diverse data, allowing access to the perspectives of the participants. It provides a systematic means of presenting results and aids in identifying recurring themes and patterns. Additionally, by closely examining the meaning across the dataset, the researcher can “see and make sense of mutual or collective experiences and meanings” (Braun and Clarke, 2012:57). Furthermore, the thematic analysis approach is considered suitable for this research as it shifts focus away from individual and unique meanings and experiences, aiming instead to uncover collective and shared meanings across the datasets (Braun and Clarke, 2012:57).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the material at hand, I undertook a thematic analysis, which involved a repeated process of reading and re-reading the transcripts multiple times. Throughout this familiarization stage, I carefully documented my thoughts and observations, ensuring that every nuance and detail was recorded with precision. To enhance the accuracy of my data collection and minimize the risk of losing any valuable information while writing, I

chose to utilize audio recordings. This approach not only preserved the integrity of the information but also enabled me to effectively monitor my tone and emotional reactions as I engaged with the data. Once I felt sufficiently familiar with the material, I moved on to the coding phase, where I developed the initial codes. This involved a systematic and structured approach, allowing me to categorically organize the codes in a manner that was both logical and comprehensible. As I delved deeper into the transcripts, I began to observe potential codes emerging organically. My initial strategy was to classify each transcript separately, taking care to highlight any text that was particularly relevant to the research question. This methodical examination ensured that I captured all relevant information before proceeding to compare the codes generated from each individual transcript.

After completing the coding process, I shifted my focus to the generation of themes. This stage required a careful examination of the codes I had produced, as several of them naturally grouped together and evolved into broader themes. Following the initial identification of these themes, I embarked on a thorough review process. I analysed, modified, and enriched the initial themes that had emerged during the earlier steps. This involved assessing the coherence and relevance of each theme, as well as gathering all essential data that was relevant to the identified categories.

The final step was to articulate and name these themes clearly, a process that culminated in the identification of four distinct themes: Livelihoods, which explores the economic aspects and circumstances of the subjects; Gender Dynamics, which examines the roles and interactions between genders within the context of the data; Diverse Forms of Violence, which encompasses the diverse types of violence discussed; and Coping Strategies, which delves into how individuals or groups manage and respond to adversity. Each of these themes encapsulates critical dimensions of the research, providing insights into the broader narrative conveyed by the data.

I will provide an in-depth explanation of each theme and present my findings from the data in chapters four and five, with the themes strategically divided between the two. These identified themes are essential in answering the research question. The final step I completed was compiling and writing up the findings from the research, which I believe will significantly contribute to the overall analysis.

Participants and context

This research engaged participants from the village of Muswodi Dipeni, a setting that is deeply rooted in my own upbringing and ongoing familial connections. The following section aims to provide comprehensive context about both the participants and their activities, drawing from established facts regarding the province of Limpopo and specifically Muswodi Dipeni, where I was raised. Muswodi Dipeni, a village that pre-dates the significant political changes of 1979, is located within Limpopo province, South Africa. That year marked a pivotal moment in history when the Venda homeland achieved independence, transforming into the Republic of Venda. This monumental shift in governance led to the election of Patrick Ramano Ramabulana Mphephu, who became both the president and the traditional leader of the newly formed Republic (Mulaudzi & Kriel, 2021:97). Under his leadership, the villages that fell under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Venda were placed under the authority of the Ramabulana dynasty. Consequently, all chiefs within this realm were required to acknowledge and submit to the rule of Patrick Ramano Ramabulana Mphephu (Mulaudzi & Kriel, 2021:97). Authority and control over all public and political matters were predominantly centralized in the hands of men. This patriarchal governance extended into the very fabric of chieftaincy, where the positions of power were exclusively reserved for men, effectively excluding women from holding any significant authority.

Muswodi Dipeni conformed to these patriarchal structures under the guidance of the Ramabulana leadership. Chief Nefolovhodwe holds the title of ruler in Muswodi Dipeni, operating under the expectations and directives established by the Ramabulana tradition. This guidance underscores the prevalence of patriarchal values that persist within the community, where women's roles are typically limited to symbolic but ultimately non-authoritative positions. Women are recognized as queen mothers (*vhakoma*), royal wives (*mutanuni*), and royal aunties (*makhadzi*). Although these roles can bestow a sense of importance and honor within the village, they do not afford women significant power or influence regarding the daily management and affairs of the royal household. As a result, the structural dynamics in Muswodi Dipeni reflect a broader societal tendency to prioritize men authority, leaving women in positions that, while meaningful, lack actual decision-making power in communal matters.

The spiritual landscape of Muswodi Dipeni is shaped by a blend of traditional beliefs and Christian practices. Every religious group is required to report its activities to the traditional government, which serves to hold these groups accountable, safeguard community members

from religious exploitation, and promote collaboration for the overall betterment of the community. As part of these measures, religious leaders must attend the traditional government assembly (khoru) twice a month on Sundays.

Economically, Muswodi Dipeni is characterized by both formally employed individuals and informal workers. Many of these women operate in the marketplace to support their families and contribute to the community. While street vendors are not required to pay for their marketplace locations, traditional leaders possess the authority to remove them, as the vendors do not have ownership over the land on which they conduct their business. This situation has motivated many vendors to set up their stalls along the roadside, appealing to those who utilize public transport. Vendors operating catering businesses often target school learners who rely on buses for their daily commute, offering baked goods in the mornings. Furthermore, street vendors also focus on catering to police officers, as the local police station is situated nearby, making it convenient for officers to purchase meals while on duty. The participants I worked with were located on the roadside, as this space offered them a cost-free option for their trade.

The presence of marketplaces, supermarkets, and spaza shops enables community members to access essential products such as vegetables, fruits, firewood, raw meat, traditional medicines, and maize meals without needing to travel long distances. Additionally, many women invest in burial society blocks, which focus on supporting families who have recently lost a loved one by providing cleaning services, cooking materials, chairs, tents, and financial assistance. During funerals, each block collects contributions from every household, with women leading the efforts to ensure the system operates smoothly. Beyond their involvement in burial societies, some women have also joined forces to establish a drop-in center aimed at supporting orphaned children and the elderly. They provide these children with food and school uniforms while also offering life guidance. Remarkably, these women initiated the drop-in center without any external financial support, pooling their own resources to make it possible.

Conclusion and limitations

This section offered a detailed exploration of the approaches and techniques I used to explore the diverse forms of violence experienced by women street vendors. The research process presented a range of challenges that necessitated careful planning and adaptability. Although I implemented several preventive measures to address potential issues, these strategies did not fully guarantee that everything would unfold according to the original plan. Nevertheless, the presence of these measures proved to be significantly more effective than a lack of preparation.

An additional layer of complexity arose from my position as both a researcher and a vendor. Navigating these dual roles required me to manage my time efficiently and find a suitable balance between my responsibilities. This dual perspective provided me with the opportunity to closely observe the interactions between participants and their customers, yielding richer and more detailed data. A critical limitation that emerged during the research was the inherent sensitivity of the topic. Engaging in discussions about violence was challenging, as it risked stirring painful memories and trauma for the participants. This sensitivity became evident when five individuals initially considered for participation chose to withdraw upon learning the subject matter of the research. To address and mitigate this limitation, I dedicated significant time to building relationships with potential participants within the marketplace. Through this process of relationship building, I sought to ensure that participants felt respected and supported while discussing such a delicate and personal topic.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART ONE: Livelihoods and Gender Dynamics

Chapter four will focus on sharing the research findings, which explored the diverse forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni, along with the strategies they employ to sustain their livelihoods. The research utilized interview methods to gather information. Twelve participants took part in in-depth interviews, resulting in detailed and comprehensive accounts of their lived experiences.

To present the findings and highlight the key issues that were identified during the research, the research employed the thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis enhances theory building, advancing the understanding of gendered economic survival, and makes comparisons easier by highlighting the similarities and differences between participants' representations of their experiences and ideas. The gathered data generated four key themes through the application of the thematic analysis approach. The conversation in this chapter will centre on the themes of "Livelihoods" and "Gender Dynamics." Experientially, and as my discussion chapter will explore, these two themes intersect with intimacy and create the ground from which any understanding of "violence" in my participants' lives occurs. For clarity, however, I have separated them in this chapter, and sub-themes that will be crucial to the research are separated from the primary themes that were found.

Livelihoods

The diverse experiences of trading that women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni spoke of are shared as a theme to ground my final analytic discussion in chapter 6 within a discursive snapshot of the daily complexities of participants' trading work. They face numerous legal, social, and economic difficulties daily. The realities of street sellers in Muswodi Dipeni are characterized by their struggles to manage household responsibilities, keep costs under control, make ends meet, and cope with the difficulties of operating in informal marketplaces. Street vendors often face harsh working conditions because they must work for lengthy periods in physically exhausting positions and get inconsistent earnings daily. In the next section, I will concentrate on reviewing the particular findings that illustrate the everyday realities of women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the everyday realities of trading. The following sub-themes will comprise this section: economic activities, domestic duties, marketplace duties balance, and work conditions.

Economic Activities

Goods traded

Though some of the vendors sell identical things such as firewood, cigarette, raw game meat, vegetables, fruits, cooked food, and baked goods (scones, muffins, magwinya), the women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni participate in diverse types of trading, as some specific trade body lotions, deodorant, tableware, school uniforms, second-hand clothing and dried vegetables (Mukusule).

Mbedzi indicated that “*I own a small catering market where I sell cooked and baked goods, with the cooked goods, I specialise in, vhuswa ha tshikoli na vhutshena (traditional yellow pap and white pap, magulu a kholomo na nngu (cattle and lamb tripes), delele la mandade (okra), mukokoroshi (hardbody chicken), na nama ya khuhu (chicken meat). I also sell muffins, scones, and magwinya (fatcooks).*”

Makana indicated, “*I sell different ranges of clothes, school uniforms, new clothes, and second-hand clothes.*”

Madamalala indicated, “*I am a self-taught businesswoman as I taught myself the skills to make the products I sell; I make polish at home and sell it. I also sell Mashonzha (mopane worms).*”

These are not “nice-to-have” goods, but essential for sustaining reproduction and care. They are also goods that are consumed rapidly, especially foodstuffs and body-care goods, and this places the traders into a demanding cycle of access to goods, competition with one another, and customer negotiations.

Trade management

To manage and ensure that her business is running smoothly, Mbedzi revealed that, “*I make the products I sell at home from 4 am till 6 am, this is because I want to ensure that my customers get hot food in the morning. When I go to the market I always take maize meal, two types of uncooked meat, pots, firewood, water, and all cooking equipment with me just to ensure that if I run out of food, I can make the food at the market using fire as I do not want to miss the afternoon customers.*”

Makana indicated, “*Every night before going to bed I ensure that I have packed my stock, as this helps me to reduce workload in the morning. At the marketplace, I put up a tent*

for the shade and then place the clothes in the clothing racks so that customers can browse the clothes easily.”

Madamalala revealed *“Every weekend I make new products o polish, then Monday to Friday (9 am till 5 pm) I go to the marketplace and lay my products on the table for display, then those who want them to buy.”*

Madamala’s portrayal of trade management is exemplicative of all my other participants in its description of a twenty-four-hour-a-day engagement with planning which has her trade at the centre of how she can sustain a livelihood. Her customers are only available at times of the day themselves (they are also creating livelihoods for themselves highly regulated by rigid demands on their own time), and thus Madamala’s “workday” is always etiolated and requires micro-organizational attention.

Products pricing

Pricing the food fully depends on the kinds of products that the vendor is selling with the catering business, *Mbedzi indicated not in italics, “The food price is organized based on the size the person wants, full plate is R100, half plate is R50, and quarter plate is R30. Customers get to choose the type of meat they want.”* Traders usually set their food price based on the size of the customer is buying, the most consistent thing in this form of trading is that the plate size does not change meaning that their prices are always fixed unless the customer is just buying the meat without the pap.

Makana stated, *“My prices depend on the amount of money I spent to buy each product when I was purchasing the stock and the money I spent to travel. If I bought a jersey for R100, I sell it for R170.”* The act of counting, and accounting for, every cent spent is very essential when it comes to determining the price of the product as the aim is to ensure that the profit generated can also include the money spent in the process of purchasing the stock (traveling expenses).

Madamalala revealed, *“I would rather pick them myself than buy 80kg of Mashonzha from other sellers as Mashonzha is the product of nature and picking them on your own also increases the profit. I measure them with a teacup and put them in a net; one cup is R40. With the polish, I sell two litter for R100.”* The price for the polish is reasonable to customers, who are aware of the fact that making polish requires spending money to buy the products that are needed to make the polish and the traveling expenses. Mashonzha also includes traveling as

the people who catch them, have to go to a specific area, when traders set prices, they also keep traveling expenses in mind as well as the products they use to clean Mashonzha and dry them.

Domestic duties and marketplace duties balance

In Muswodi Dipen, women's street vendors play a significant role in their households. Their obligations go beyond just supporting their families financially; they also need to strike a balance between their domestic duties and their duties in the marketplace. This is raised in more detail under the theme of “gendered dynamics” but recognition of this need to balance a range of different forms of labour is of course intrinsic to the meaning of the traders’ livelihoods. They work as traders not simply to sustain themselves but to support large families, and those families in turn demand more than simply the funds raised through trading. It is critical to recognize that women balance their responsibilities in the home and the workplace differently; these distinctions are a result of the support they receive from their families.

Khomola explained that *“what makes it easy for me to balance my household responsibility and street vending activities is the fact that I have three girls, they know that we have to generate income. They play their part by helping with the house chores and whenever I am unavailable to go to the market they always go to the market and take my place so that the business can continue.”* Bringing a balance between household duties and marketplace duties is important, having people that one can depend on is essential as it reduces the workload for the vendor.

Nemakonde is another participant who revealed *“I have people who work at the farm, my older daughter, helps with overseeing the farm and ensuring that the workers we have are working well. I manage the sales of the products with my second eldest daughter, my other three children are still going to school, their role is to ensure that they help out with house chores and get an education. In simple terms, I can say that my family is my main support system.”* For Khomola and Nemakonde the main source of support system are their family members, especially their children who also help out with the process of running the business.

Although there are vendors who receive support from their family members, the collected data shows that vendors work extremely hard to balance their domestic duties and marketplace duties.

Ndou indicated that *“family responsibilities and marketplace are difficult to manage as I mostly rely on myself to provide for my family. I must wake up early around 04:00 in the*

morning every day to ensure that before I go to the marketplace, I have prepared the food for my grandchild since my daughter is still a high school learner.” Another participant revealed that they are faced with the difficulties of having to be a parent and a provider as they do not have external support.

Madamalala mentioned *“As a single parent and a widow, I must be both the breadwinner and the homemaker, which is incredibly demanding. Every day I have to deal with the difficulties that come with having to provide for my children and also be a parent to them. Most of the time I am tired because of the multiple roles I need to play for the betterment of my family.”*

Individuals identified as women are often expected to engage in unpaid reproductive labour, or to hire someone else to perform it, regardless of their work environment. However, street vendors face a particularly heavy burden due to their unique circumstances. They operate in open marketplaces and are consistently exposed to economic instability, as their earnings are not guaranteed. This precarious situation makes it challenging for them to balance unpaid labour at home with the demands of their work, which lacks protections. Vendors cannot take “vacations,” and there is no supportive policy in place to provide benefits such as paid sick leave or unemployment assistance.

Working conditions

Two things that cannot be separated from each other that are essential in the financial stability of vendors are marketplace location and customers. These two factors influence each other as vendors prefer a location that is close to the bus stops, taxi ranks, and close to the busy road. This is because those spaces are always filled with a high volume of people who are potential customers. These two factors are sometimes controlled by building shacks that are assigned to specific vendors, meaning people can use the same marketplace without having to move every day. However, vendors who do not have shacks rely on showing up early to the marketplace and the belief that everyone should occupy the space they have been using. This does not always work for people to compete for a better marketplace to access the best location, leading to vendors losing their regular space and regular customers.

Munyai told me *“ Forced removal, one time I was forced to move my marketplace. This was because someone wanted to place their marketplace in my spot.”* The marketplace was considered to be good for attracting customers, but due to the competition for customers and good space, Munyai had to experience forced removal from fellow vendors.

Munyai continued to indicate that *“although I was able to keep the loyal customers, I lost my spot and the chance to get more new customers.”* For outsiders, it is just a spot, but for Munyai, the spot meant growth to her business as it was an open spot that was able to attract more people as they worked to the bus stop and the attraction of more people meant more earnings.

Another participant who faced an issue that affected her business was Makana, who said

“One time I was late because I had to take my grandchild to school when I got there I found someone doing their business at my marketplace location, when I tried to talk to them they said it was not my land and it’s a free country.” What Makana experienced is another form of competition that vendors are exposed to, for that day she had to deal with a fellow vendor who was not willing to change location since Makana came late. The experiences that Makana was exposed to were serious and profit loss for the day as she had to go back home since there was no place for her to pack her things.

Makana indicated, *“It was one of the most difficult days for me and my business as I had to go back home with the stock, most of my customers were calling me asking where I was at and they wanted to pay off their debts, just know that money was lost on that day.”*

The issues presented by Munyai and Makana paint a picture that the working environment influences their earnings and failure to control and consistently be located in the same location means economic loss and an opportunity to generate new customers, which affects their profit margins. Looking at the livelihoods of Muswodi Dipeni women street vendors reveals that their work comes with obstacles and complications that affect their families and the way they provide for them. Understanding how gender dynamics influence these women's experiences, interactions, opportunities, and power structures is also critical.

Gender Dynamics

The experiences of Muswodi Dipeni's women street vendors are significantly shaped by gender dynamics. These dynamics affect power dynamics, interactions, and the work that women do at home and workplace. Traditional gender norms necessitate that those who are gendered as take care of household chores first before heading to workplace. Their attempts to make a living are further hampered by harassment and violence motivated by gender and this is fully explored in my next chapter. To effectively address the difficulties experienced by women street vendors and provide interventions that would assist their social and economic well-being, these gender dynamics must be identified. To give readers a thorough understanding of the gendered

dynamics most talked about in my data from women street vendors, this section will cover the following sub-themes: gender roles and labour, access to resources, Vulnerability to social conventions, and safety and protection.

Women who work as street sellers are severely impacted by social stigma, which has a gendered impact on their lives and livelihoods. The marginalization of women in the informal sector is a result of cultural beliefs and biases, which are examined in this subtheme. The legitimacy and economic potential of women street vendors are frequently undermined by discriminatory practices and disparaging attitudes. From verbal abuse to exclusion from desirable vending locations, these gendered realities take many different shapes.

Gender Roles and Labour

Due to historical gender norms in the context, post the introduction of wage-labour men have traditionally performed paid labour outside the home, while women have historically performed unpaid domestic and household-related farming duties (this, of course, has changed dramatically in the later 20 centuries, but the legacy of the idea remains). In this section, I will explore the meaning of “domestic” labour as gendered, and as something that shapes women's sense of their own identity from the moment they are born into families that believe that the work of caring inside a home belongs to persons gendered as girls and women. The fact that these women may eventually become substantial contributors to the family economy through their public trade profession has no bearing on or diminishes the socio-cultural set of domestic responsibilities they assume.

Gumbu explained *“Although my husband has another wife I still have my duties to fulfill as his wife. I can say the best way that works for me is to wake up early and ensure that I prepare for my household responsibilities before I even start planning to go to the marketplace.* This quotation makes clear that women street vendors' unpaid domestic duties may span across several “identities”: wife, first/second/ and/or “abandoned wife”, mother, sister, sister-in-law, and/or simultaneously others. Being gendered as “woman” does not entail a simple relationship with others, but a complex and multi-determined location of shifting, and often psychologically and economically challenging responsibilities.

Ndou told me that *“my role as a mother and grandmother has placed me in a space where I am always faced with a challenge of balancing my duty as a vendor and a parent. Since my daughter is still going to school, I have to ensure that before I go to the marketplace, my grandchild has eaten and take her to the daycare.”* Ndou's experiences demonstrate that

women's duties are not solely dependent on their marital status; even as a widow, she must continue to fulfil her responsibilities as a mother and a grandmother. As a mother, it is her responsibility to take care of the household responsibilities while also making sure that her children are financially supported.

Access to Resources

A key component of women street sellers' success and long-term viability is their access to markets and consumers. This sub-theme explores the difficulties and possibilities associated with obtaining desirable vending locations and drawing in a consistent customer. Gender norms and biases that favour men vendors present additional barriers for women, making these issues often gendered, and my participants were clear about this.

Munyai indicated *“Forced removal, one time I was forced to move my marketplace. This was because someone wanted to place their marketplace in my spot, I was told the spot was not good for me because I am a woman. My spot was good because it was close to the bus stop.”* A good market location gives vendors access to more customers, which increases their profit margin. However, women vendors must cope with the unfairness of being forcibly removed from their businesses because of their gender.

Nemakonde indicated *“Let me give you something that happened just after losing my husband. I was collecting money from the customers who owed me, and I remember clearly one customer saying that I was just buying your products because I respected your husband, the person went on and refused to pay the money.”* Given that Nemakonde's loss of her husband coincided with the customer loss and nonpayment of debt, this quote serves as a clear example of how gender can occasionally affect the capacity to acquire customers.

Vulnerability to social conventions

Women who work as street sellers are severely impacted by social stigma, which has a gendered impact on their lives and livelihoods. The legitimacy and economic potential of women street vendors are frequently undermined by discriminatory practices and disparaging attitudes. From verbal abuse to exclusion from desirable vending locations, these gendered realities take many different shapes.

Gumbu indicated, *“As a woman who traded cigarettes, I was judged and labelled as a woman who does not care about other people’s children since my children do not smoke. I do not sell cigarettes to people younger than 20 years old. I have seen male vendors selling*

cigarettes to young boys and girls, but I have not heard anyone challenging and questioning them. I guess the fact that I am a woman makes me an easy target.” People in the marketplace, including members of the community, may take issue with the things that women trade. The problems they encounter related to the goods they deal in are shaped by their gender. This causes pejorative reputations for women sellers, casting doubt on their worth both mothers and women, and hindering their vending activities.

Masakona indicated, *“I have been accused of sleeping with my male customers, for such a long time, there was a rumor spreading that I use my perfumes and deodorant products to seduce and trap men. I am telling you that I had sold the products to the wives of my married male customers so that I would not be accused of such filthy things.”* This suggests that women vendors are sexualized and can be perceived as homewreckers who use their businesses to extort men from other women. Even though these are only rumours, the effects on the women vendors are grave because they may have to deal with individuals who take the rumours seriously and face the harm that the rumours cause to their business.

Sigonde indicated that *“since I am in the catering business, I have been accused of using a love potion to attract other women’s men, which is not true. I would never do that. I was once told that I love money too much and that being a woman makes me an easy target, so I should watch my working hours.”* Because they think that cooking and selling food are the duties of women and should not be commercialized, men frequently refuse to give women street vendors money.

As suggested in my introduction to this chapter, the material in my data concerning participants’ livelihoods was intimately wrapped into their language about being gendered as women, which they recognized fully as something that influenced all aspects of their relationship to power, responsibilities, and to the fabric of their daily work.

CHAPTER: FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS PART TWO: Diverse forms of violence and Coping Strategies

Building on the findings and knowledge that I presented in chapter four (Livelihoods and Gender Dynamics), the focus of chapter five is to present “Diverse forms of violence and Coping strategies” themes that were generated through the use of a thematic analysis approach. As discussed in the literature review, the term “violence” comprises a very wide range of

relations to physical, material, political, and psychological harm, and different relations to the intentions and impacts of such harm. My research is focused on the experiences women street traders themselves describe as violent and how they impact their actual labour as traders. Given the gendered likelihood of the violences they may face, such violences may intersect and blur, and I discuss this in Chapter six.

Diverse forms of violence

Violence has emerged as one of the most prominent components of the daily struggles that women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni face. The research has shown that violence manifests in many forms, exposing vendors to unpleasant experiences. In this section, I will divide the diverse forms of violence into sub-themes to give a clear understanding of the identified diverse forms of violence that the Muswodi Dipeni women have experienced. The sub-themes are organized as follows, physical, economic, emotional, street trading's business-customer violence, and structural violence.

Physical Violence

The social and economic marginalization of women street vendors expose them to physical violence. This form of violence takes place in many shapes and places. Forms of physical violence often take the shape of women vendors getting attacked by people who are trying to take their goods, money, and belongings forcefully. Perpetrators usually target their working hours, frequently focusing on attacking vendors in the dark or early hours of the day when they are most vulnerable.

Munyai revealed that “ *when I was forced to move my marketplace, I was exposed to physical violence, there was a time when two people came to my marketplace in the evening when I was about to pack up my things, they were hiding their faces. They placed a knife in my neck and said that if I do not move then I will lose my business forever. Next thing I received two tight slaps. I am telling you, I was so hurt by the fact that people have such guts, to hurt old woman.* ” The perpetrators targeted Munyai at night as they knew that other vendors and customers were not around to help her, resulting in Munyai suffering from a physical attack because she was not willing to let go of her marketplace. The physical harm that Munyai suffered came with exposure to threats and loss of her marketplace location as the main reason behind the attack was to get her to move from her marketplace location.

Ndou indicated that *“the most painful form of violence that I experienced was physical violence, three men forcefully took my belongings and money, when I tried to resist and scream for help they started to beat me up and promised that they would do more harm if I continued to scream.”* Ndou's experience highlights that resisting and challenging perpetrators often leads to greater harm for her. This situation underscores the constant vigilance women vendors must maintain, always having to watch their backs daily.

When it comes to the issue of physical violence, another reality of which the participants spoke, women street vendors do not only experience physical violence in the public marketplace, but they are also exposed to physical violence which is physical at their homes.

Thinawanga explained that *“my husband is unemployed, and he felt financially threatened by my business, he would say mean things to me and the children, to a point where he started to physically beat me up, It was tough to a point where I went back to my mother home.”* Not all my interviewees spoke of this type of violence, but it is important to my findings that the ubiquity of the threat of physical violence for women street traders creates a material and psychological context of sustained fear. Such ubiquity includes the home, not only in the sense of being vulnerable to a partner's assault but also as a location where the trader might be thought of as someone with resources that can be stolen.

Matamela stated, *“When you are a vendor who lives with just her children, people tend to want to take advantage of that. I experienced physical violence at my home; the robbers left me with injuries that took time to heal.”*

Although this research did not explore with the women their experiences of physical violence outside the context of ‘the moment,’ (their adult lives as street traders), their willingness to describe the multiple environments in which they have been physically injured suggests both familiarity and their disgust with the physical harm meted out to women traders.

Economic violence

Muswodi Dipeni women street vendors face instances of targeted economic violence, in a sense beyond that of the structural violences which locate them as poor, and subjects them to economic loss. Sometimes, this occurs at the intersection of structural and targeted economic harm, such as when a street vendor is forcibly relocated from her marketplace location.

Thinawanga indicated that *“When I moved my business to the new area where they were constructing the Nemukombame Usave, the people from the local civic kept on demanding*

money from me saying, I need to pay them when I refused, they threatened to end my business, and sometimes they took my goods, it's hard to generate profit with this kind of treatment."

Matamela indicated that *"I was forcefully removed from my market without warning, I lost my regular customers as I was moved to a new location. This affected my business profit for a long time."* Forced removal from the marketplace influences the flow of the business and the way the vendors access customers negatively as vendors try to establish themselves by being in a suitable location and consistently located at one place so that their regular customers can access them easily as revealed by Thinawanga and Matamela.

Sigonde revealed, *"With robbery, one time I found the shack where I store my equipments opened, the plates, pots, chairs, and table were missing. I knew I locked the place, but my things were gone. I spent my money to replace the things that I lost. Money that I was budgeting for something different."* An act of robbery was not just robbery as it came with the loss of goods that led to the need for replacement of the goods lost affecting the economic gains of Sigonde as she lost her goods and had to spend money to buy another stock. Sigonde's experience echoes that of Matamela, who was physically harmed during an attack on her home.

Khomola shared, *"I never really felt safe around the marketplace. It took me 3 months to go back to the marketplace. For three months, I was not making money."* When one is working as a vendor there is no such thing as paid leave, the economic insatiability that comes with being unable to be present in the marketplace causes a major financial challenge in the lives of vendors.

The descriptions of Khomola, Sigonde, Matamela, and others illustrate how economic, emotional, and physical violence are interconnected. Physical assaults instill fear that impacts marketplace participation, leading to income loss and increased vulnerability to aggressive partners. This creates a cycle of marginalization and pain that defies easy categorization. Informal sector vendors, already operating in unprotected environments, face ongoing economic violence, perpetuating their vulnerability and economic instability.

Emotional violence

The informal sector is usually made up of vulnerable spaces that are not protected. Which exposes vendors to diverse customers; both positive and negative. This flows to the emotional turmoil that vendors talk about enduring in the marketplace. What they say about this deepens the understanding of the violence that women vendors experience is significant as it recognizes

the importance of affect in what it takes to live as a street vendor in rural South Africa. My participants were clear about the implications of the emotional violence that they have endured.

Munyai revealed, *“Two weeks after the incident, the same people followed me at home and you need to remember, I just live with my children. They threatened us as a family and promised to do worse than they had already done.”* Munyai's experience highlights the pervasive fear and anxiety faced by street vendors. Not only was she physically attacked and threatened when they were forcing her to move from her marketplace, but the perpetrators also followed her home. This relentless intimidation ensured that both she and her family lived in constant fear, amplifying their distress and anxiety.

Khomola shared, *“One time I was at the marketplace during late hours, it was around 20:30, some boys came and forced me to give them my stock for free. When I refused, they threatened to harm me. Calling me a weak woman and easy target.”* Khomola experiences a blend of fear, frustration, and helplessness in this situation. The prospect of being attacked or humiliated evokes a profound sense of vulnerability and anger. Being labelled a “weak woman” and an “easy target” not only undermines her strength but also highlights the gender-based nature of the threat she faces, exacerbating her emotional turmoil.

Masakona indicated, *“The verbal violence was mostly coming from the partners of my customers; they did not want me to continue selling my products to their husbands as I was a threat to them. It was bad as I was called all sorts of bad names.”* Masakona's experience illustrates the emotional toll of violence in the workplace. Hostility from her customers' partners led to derogatory language that undermined her dignity and created a stressful environment. This ongoing emotional violence fosters fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem, impacting her overall well-being and sense of security.

Gumbu shared, *“My husband is a police officer, some people use that to discourage me, saying that a police officer's wife should not sell cigarettes but most police officers drink alcohol and smoke.”* Gumbu's experience highlights the complexities of character attacks and the intertwining of emotional and economic violence. Societal pressure tied to her husband's job exposes deep-rooted stereotypes that undermine her personal and professional choices, diminishing her autonomy and casting doubt on her integrity. This illustrates the lasting impact of gender and marital roles in social dynamics, often affecting those just trying to make a living.

Customer-based violence

The informal sector opens room for price negotiation as customers tend to fix their prices. Many people would recognize price negotiation as part of trading without considering the impact it has on street vendors as it exposes vendors to financial exploitation. My participants were clear about the implications of price negotiation in the livelihood of street vendors as they recognize it as something that can produce violence.

Thinawanga shared, *“Customers usually threaten us that if we do not reduce our prices, they will take their money to other vendors, they manipulate us to get what they want. We are forced to give in to their demands as we need the money even though we are losing money by reducing our prices.”* The act of violence that is taking place here is the economic and emotional violence that comes with price negotiation as the vendor was threatened, manipulated emotionally, and subjected to reducing her price, which automatically affects her profit margins.

Masakona told me that *“in the month where I give into customers’ demands and change the price, I usually lose 10% of the profit.”* Price negotiation mostly benefits customers by economically violating vendors as it comes with the loss of money, selling the products at a low rate means less money and this is a form of violence that customers reinforce without considering the loss suffered by vendors.

Makana added *“If I were to tell you how I have suffered in the hands of customers because of price negotiations you will not believe me, one time a customer took things that cost R330 but was willing to pay R250, it means I lost R80. When I tried to tell the customer to pay the full amount, they did not listen, they just put in the money and left. Every time a customer negotiates for a low price, it eats away at my already slim profit margins. It is as if they do not understand the effort and expense that goes into what I am selling.”* This situation is considered robbery, as the vendor did not agree to the customer's self-set price. Understanding price negotiations and their impact on vendors is essential for economic growth in the informal sector, as they can lead to instability and emotional and economic violence.

Masakona told another story: *“Another incident was when a customer refused to pay, they had taken a food warmer, costing R1200, and we agreed that she would pay in two months. The first two months went by, and I did not receive the money.”* Masakona's experience shows that the customer misused their power by agreeing to pay for food warmer over two months and then failing to fulfil their commitment. The situation put a financial strain on Masakona,

who had to retrieve the product herself. The customer's refusal to pay and return the item reflects a betrayal of trust and highlights the financial and emotional manipulation vendors often face. This misuse of power increases the economic vulnerability and stress that vendors like Masakona endure daily.

Structural violence

What I discern from the women's talk about their lives as street traders as a core experience could be sub-thematized as structural violence, a form of violence that is embedded in systems that create and enforce class inequality, and which frequently draw on the socio-political organization of race and gender. Structural violence is normalized and reinforced by structures that are put in place by the government and even within the community at large, such as local authorities or police forces. The Muswodi Dipeni community is locally governed by Traditional leaders who have different structures in place to ensure that people are living in peace and harmony. Muswodi Dipeni has a Satellite Police Station which was opened to ensure that community members are safe and protected from any form of violence and criminal activities. With all these structures that have been put in place at Muswodi Dipeni, women street vendors are keenly aware of their vulnerability since their work as traders is policed by authorities not necessarily supportive of what they do as traders and what they do, especially as "women traders."

A cycle of poverty and marginalization is sustained by their exposure to different forms of exploitation and abuse due to the lack of protection from the local authority. When they report their cases they are met with resistance than help.

Munyai indicated *"I tried to involve the police, but they told me they do not deal with street issues (zwitshela zwa tshiratani). When I took the matter to the local Civic community, they favoured the other person since he already had a connection with the members of the Civic community."* Munyai's experience emphasizes structural violence caused by the bias and negligence of the police, as well as the civic community's favouritisms, which fails to protect and treat women street vendors fairly, hence perpetuating injustice and marginalization.

Mbedzi reported, *"Police frequently ignore us or tell us it is not their problem when we report theft or harassment occurrences. The system that ought to be supporting us instead makes us feel abandoned and unsafe."* The police station that was established to support and protect the community members is violating them by not responding to the complaints of harassment, theft, and assault they face, and in this way, the structural violence which already

marginalizes them as poor and “irrelevant” to questions of economic growth or political power is thus realized through institutional neglect.

How is structural violence implemented?

Gumbu shared, “*When I told my husband about the situation, he told me that I should not even think about embarrassing him by reporting petty crimes. Ever since my husband said that to me I never thought about reporting the issue to any authority. I just endure the verbal violence from parents.*” This is a two-part violation, the husband who happens to be part of the law enforcement team is choosing to disallow his wife to report the violence she experienced, and this woman no longer sees the need to report the crimes she faces.

Thinawanga revealed that “*my husband is unemployed, and he felt financially threatened by my business, he would say mean things to me and the children, to a point where he started to physically beat me up.*” The revelation from Gumbu and Thinawanga shows violence manifesting at home, where husbands become perpetrators of violence, and this brings another dimension to the understanding of violence in the lives of vendors as it highlights the implication of domestic violence in the economic growth of women street vendors.

Munyai shared, “*In my case, it was the law enforcement and another vendor. I was forced to move my marketplace by a male street vendor, and the next thing I was getting threats, and my family was in danger. When I tried to talk to the Civic community, they defended the person who was after my marketplace. The law failed me and my family; my case was not taken seriously.*”

These women’s experiences reflect a harrowing reality: a lack of protection, respect, and justice for street vendors. Their livelihoods are threatened by those who should protect them, and their dignity is undermined by systemic neglect.

Coping Strategies

Women street vendors are repeatedly marginalized and subjected to violence that comes with being gendered as a woman and existing in the informal sector which is already a marginalised economic sector. The previous themes on the livelihoods, gendered dynamics, and diverse shapes of violence have helped in showing that women street vendors are not just resisting the economic inequality that comes with being gendered as a woman in a marginalised economic

sector by generating their livelihoods, but they are simultaneously forced to confront and resist the violence that exists in this economic sector, to sustain their livelihoods. This section will dive into strategies that the Muswodi Dipeni women street vendors use to manage and survive the violences they are exposed to. The sub-themes will be organized as follows: solidarity, and resistance to customer-based violence.

Solidarity

Safety and protection are crucial factors that vendors have to manage to sustain their livelihoods as the absence of safety and protection from law enforcement exposes vendors to economic, physical, emotional, and structural violence. The absence of safety and protection in the informal sector has encouraged women to form a group as vendors that allow them to walk to and from their marketplace together as a way of resisting violence in the informal sector.

Khomola shared, *“The safety issues have influenced most street vendor women to knock off early. I have a group of women that we walk home together after work. We are at the marketplace from 6:30 till 19:00. This is the only thing that has been working for us.”*

Munyai revealed, *“I do not go to the marketplace alone; I always walk with other vendors. I always ensure that my working hours align with my other vendors' working hours so that we can knock off together and go home together. This has kept me safe till today.”*

Sigonde indicated, *“We have talked about the issue of women's safety and our solution is walking in groups. As women, the best way we can protect ourselves is to knock off early and walk home as a group. We are not willing to take risks when it comes to our safety.”*

The above participants have shown that as a form of resisting the violence, the women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni recognized the multiple threats to their safety and organized in solidarity that allows them to feel safer around each other as they go to the marketplace and leave the marketplace at the same time.

Resistance to economic instability

The informal sector is already a marginalised economic sector which means that the income that the vendors make is not stable, the economic violence that vendors are exposed to adds to the economic instability that vendors have to deal with as when the violence takes place they

are faced with loss. This requires vendors to have measures in place that would allow them to continue with their business and sustain their families.

Mbedzi spoke about solidarity in financial planning: *“As you can see there are a lot of women in the marketplace, we play stokvel monthly to save money and be able to help each other with buying our stocks, every month we give R2500 to one vendor, then the next month to another vendor, and repeat the process monthly until everyone got their share. Since we are ten, a person gets R25000.”*

Makana added to this: *“I am a member of the women’s club, we are a group of thirteen women, every month we get together and contribute a certain amount, and we all get access to the money in December. As a member of the club, I am allowed to borrow the money and return it with interest, the good part about the interest is that it makes you more money as the interest brings in more money. This has played a significant role in helping me to fund my business most of the time as I can always use the money from the club for my business.”*

Clubs and stokvels are a big part of informal business, these groups allow vendors to get money that they can use to buy products they need and also in times of emergency they can get the money from those groups. It is important to note that even though this way of raising and saving money is considered to be informal, even those who are formally employed use it to save and generate more money for the betterment of their families.

Resistance to customer-based violence

Price negotiation comes with all kinds of violence, but the dominant violence is economic as price negotiation affects the profit margin negatively and causes economic instability. Vendors have the right to resist price negotiation as they are the ones who are affected by the negotiation. The Muswodi Dipeni women have shared ways that they use to resist the economic violence that comes with price negotiation as a way to bring control to their profit margins.

Khomola said that she has *“less discount and more honest conversation with my customers. In cases where customers are not willing to listen, I just give them products that are equal to the money they are willing to pay.”* Munyai agreed: *“I only agree to price negotiation if customers are buying things that cost more money than when they are buying cheap things. I would not reduce prices for baked goods and cigarettes, but I can make a deal if one is buying something that is totalling R150 and above.”*

Although vendors cannot fully say no to the price of vending, they have come up with the above strategies to ensure that they can control their profit margins and be able to sustain their economic earnings amid the price negotiation process. These strategies are essential for the survival of their families and their businesses. Vendors use techniques such as offering a lower discount, having straightforward discussions, and setting hard boundaries in price negotiations. This suggests the use of psychodynamic and communicative skills in both anticipating and resisting customer bullying. As demonstrated by Khomola and Munyai, these tactics allow them to maintain some control over their profit margins while also resisting economic violence.

As the introduction to this chapter suggests, participants' talk and stories about their encounters with violence can be presented within sub-themes, but this tends to simplify and even diminish the meaning of their experiences. I chose to sub-thematize both to connect with much of the literature on that highlights the existence violence that is targeted towards women which tends to siloize diverse forms of violence (often concerning questions of law and healing) and to pay as much attention as possible to what the material offered. The chapter suggests that there are many different forms of violence to be found in the participants' talk with me and that these forms both arise from their work as women street traders and affect the informal business organization and the way people work. At the same time, my participants are not only fully conscious of the interlinks between their gender, their work, and the violence they experience but can anticipate its dangers and sometimes strategize against it.

CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Introduction

This research explored the diverse forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni and the strategies they draw on to sustain their livelihoods. The objectives of this research were to contribute to feminist research on the impact of working in the informal sector for women, explore the gender dynamics involved in street trading for women as a specific site of informal labour, explore the nature and meaning of violence as one facet of gender dynamics women street traders and lastly to analyse the strategies women street vendors employ to negotiate and resist violence. The findings reveal a variety of violence types, including physical, economic, emotional, customer-based, and structural violence. Furthermore, women have developed coping mechanisms that include fostering solidarity with one another and implementing individual strategies to maintain their livelihoods. In this discussion chapter, I will delve deeper into these findings, exploring their significance in light of relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical data. The discussion will be organized around several key questions: What are the diverse forms of violence reported by women street vendors? How does gender shape the violence experienced by these women? How does violence impact the economic activities and livelihoods of women street vendors? Lastly, what coping strategies do women street vendors employ to sustain their livelihoods?

What are the diverse forms of violence reported by women street vendors?

Women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni encounter a wide range of violence that adversely affects their daily lives and economic activities. The types of violence they report can be categorized as physical, economic, emotional, customer-based, and structural. Physical violence is a prevalent threat faced by these vendors. Many experiences involve forced removals that often involve physical harm and intimidation. This includes assaults from customers, fellow vendors, or even law enforcement officers. Such violence not only jeopardizes their physical safety but also fosters a hostile working environment. The persistent fear of physical attacks restricts their freedom of movement, compelling them to operate under less favourable conditions to avoid conflict. The impact of physical violence on the personal safety and economic stability of women street vendors is profound. The imminent threat of harm forces vendors to comply with various demands, or else risk severe repercussions, as illustrated by one participant who was assaulted as a warning to ensure compliance. This

violence transcends the marketplace, with some vendors facing threats and attacks at home, where they are targeted for the theft of stock, further intensifying their economic vulnerabilities. The intersection of physical and economic violence generates a pervasive climate of fear that severely hinders their ability to work effectively and safely.

The findings of this research align with earlier studies examining the impact of violence on women engaged in informal economies. Mlambo (2021:236) has pointed out that forced displacements and acts of physical violence can have devastating repercussions on the income and overall well-being of families reliant on street vending. Similarly, Barker (2007:46) underscores that concerns over theft and criminal violence loom large in the daily lives of street vendors, creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear. This research enriches the existing body of feminist studies by offering detailed accounts of specific incidents of violence, such as threats with knives and direct physical assaults. These accounts reveal not only the immediate disruption to vendors' ability to work but also the long-lasting effects on their economic stability and personal safety. By incorporating the individual stories of women who navigate these difficulties, the research sheds light on the unique vulnerabilities faced by women street vendors in their struggle against violence. This focus on lived experiences adds a vital dimension to feminist studies, underscoring the intersection of gender, economic survival, and the pervasive threat of violence in informal economies.

Women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni face a serious and widespread issue of economic violence. The research findings highlight that these women often experience forced removals from crucial selling locations, which severely impede their business activities. Such displacements lead to substantial economic setbacks; when they are uprooted from bustling spots, they not only lose their existing loyal customer base but also struggle to attract new customers on time. This disruption is particularly harmful, as consistent foot traffic is vital for their financial well-being and the long-term viability of their enterprises. The repercussions of these forced removals extend beyond immediate sales losses, threatening the overall economic sustainability of these vendors and their families.

Moreover, the situation is further complicated by the demands imposed by municipalities and local officials, who often require vendors to pay fees or bribes to continue operating their businesses. This creates an environment of uncertainty where the threat of unlawful removal looms large if these payments are not made, intensifying their financial precarity. On top of this, there are alarming instances where local authorities resort to confiscating vendors' goods

without compensation, highlighting a blatant disregard for their livelihoods and illustrating the systemic economic exploitation that these women face daily. Such practices not only undermine their ability to earn a living but also perpetuate cycles of poverty and vulnerability within their communities.

Research conducted by Legodi and Kanjere (2015:64) provides detailed insights into how municipal by-laws create significant obstacles for women attempting to conduct business. These regulations often impose restrictions that make it difficult for traders to operate freely and competitively. Moreover, when traders' goods are seized through forceful means, women are disproportionately affected. They frequently become targets for law enforcement and criminals alike, who perceive them as vulnerable and less likely to resist (Legodi and Kanjere, 2015:64). This exploitation highlights the intersection of gender and economic insecurity, underscoring the urgent need for structural changes to protect these women in their economic pursuits.

Women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni face significant emotional violence, largely due to their precarious position and the absence of protective measures in the informal sector. Research reveals that these vendors often experience psychological distress through various forms of emotional turmoil, particularly during instances of forced removals by authorities. They are subjected to threats that create an environment of intimidation, leaving them in a constant state of anxiety and fear, always wary of the next potential confrontation. During these forced removals, the vendors not only confront the immediate danger to their livelihoods but also endure gender-targeted attacks that exacerbate their vulnerability. Such experiences contribute to a pervasive sense of dread, severely affecting their mental health and diminishing their feelings of safety. This turmoil undermines their ability to operate their businesses with confidence and peace of mind. In addition to the challenges posed by enforcement actions, women street vendors encounter verbal harassment and intimidation from some customers during their daily transactions. This includes a barrage of derogatory remarks, insults, and unfounded accusations that target their character and competencies. Such abuse not only undermines their dignity but also erodes their self-esteem, making it even more challenging for them to maintain a positive presence in their roles as entrepreneurs. The cumulative impact of these experiences contributes to a hostile environment that deeply affects their lives and work. Additionally, women street vendors often encounter attacks specifically targeting their gender and character. Labels such as "weak" or "easy targets" not only diminish their strength but also

highlight gender-based threats, exacerbating their emotional distress. These stigmas foster a widespread sense of vulnerability and anger among these women. Moreover, accusations of using love potions to disrupt households lead to further derogatory labels, such as “home wreckers,” adding a layer of emotional violence. Such accusations frequently originate from the partners of customers, who view the vendors as threats, resulting in hostility and disparaging language directed toward them. This ongoing emotional violence can engender feelings of fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem, ultimately impacting the vendors’ overall well-being and sense of security. The pervasive nature of emotional violence creates a cycle of vulnerability, where women remain at constant risk of psychological harm both in the marketplace and at home. Addressing this issue necessitates a comprehensive approach that not only provides immediate support but also confronts the underlying gender inequalities.

Customer-based violence poses a serious threat to women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni, yet this pressing issue has not received the attention it deserves in existing research. This category of violence encompasses a range of harmful behaviours, including emotional abuse, harassment, and even physical aggression perpetrated by customers. The nature of interactions between vendors and customers in the informal sector creates a unique environment where women street vendors frequently encounter various forms of mistreatment, significantly hindering their ability to operate their businesses effectively.

Research findings reveal that customer-based violence is expressed in multiple ways, such as psychological intimidation, unwarranted harassment, and outright physical confrontations. Many customers take advantage of the vendors’ desperation to make sales, employing tactics that involve bullying to negotiate unfairly low prices or demanding to take goods on credit without any intention of future payment. Such exploitative behaviour not only undermines the financial viability of these vendors but also inflicts emotional pain, as it diminishes the value of the hard work they put into sourcing and preparing their products. This continuous onslaught of pressure erodes their self-esteem, heightens stress and anxiety levels, and contributes to overall economic instability. The aggression often has a gendered dimension, as societal perceptions suggest that women are easier to intimidate than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, the research underscores that widowed and unmarried women vendors endure distinctive forms of customer-based violence that adversely impact their financial outcomes. These women frequently face disrespectful treatment from customers who refuse to honour payments, often arguing that their past willingness to pay was solely out of respect for the

vendors' deceased husbands or male family members. This entrenched bias directly injures the earnings of women vendors, as customers typically believe they should pay men more than women for the same goods.

Despite the severity of customer-based violence, there remains a significant gap in research addressing this phenomenon within the context of street vending, particularly in terms of its gendered implications. Current studies have predominantly concentrated on broader patterns of violence within the informal sector, overlooking the intricate, day-to-day interactions that occur between vendors and their customers. This research aims to bridge that gap by offering comprehensive accounts and in-depth analysis of the customer-based violence faced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni. By documenting their lived experiences and drawing attention to this specific form of violence, this study highlights an overlooked issue and emphasizes the urgent need for further scholarly inquiry and targeted interventions in this critical area.

Structural violence represents a critical and pervasive challenge for women street vendors operating in the Muswodi Dipeni community, intricately entangled with the complexities of class, race, and gender dynamics. This specific form of violence, often integrated into the established frameworks of authority—including government structures, traditional leaders, and local law enforcement—aims to enhance community safety but frequently ends up neglecting and undermining the very individuals it purports to protect. As a result, women street vendors find themselves increasingly vulnerable and economically unstable.

The research underscores that structural violence manifests in several distressing ways within this community. For instance, women regularly face forced removals from their designated market locations, a practice that disrupts their livelihoods and threatens their income. Additionally, they encounter economic exploitation through unfair price negotiations, where they are pressured to accept less than fair market value for their goods. Negligence from authorities exacerbates these issues, perpetuating a poverty and marginalization cycle that's hard to break. When these women seek assistance from local authorities—such as the police or traditional councils—they often meet with indifference or dismissal. Many reported being told their grievances lack sufficient evidence, a frustrating and disheartening response largely due to their inability to pinpoint specific perpetrators of violence or exploitation. This lack of support only deepens their sense of marginalization and disempowerment.

Moreover, the issues of favouritism and corruption within the traditional council add another layer of complexity. Participants in the study revealed that their complaints are routinely overlooked if the individuals involved have established connections with influential traditional leaders. This selective attention to grievances perpetuates a sense of injustice and reinforces the economic violence faced by these women, solidifying their marginalized social status.

The impact of structural violence extends beyond the streets and into the home, entwining personal relationships with broader societal issues. One participant shared her experience of seeking help from her husband, who works in law enforcement. Instead of receiving support, her concerns were dismissed, leaving her feeling unsupported and discouraged from reporting the emotional abuse she endured from customers. Such dismissals contribute to feelings of helplessness and isolation among these women. Another moving account emphasized the effects of a husband's unemployment, which resulted in emotional and physical abuse directed at his partner as he projected his financial insecurities onto her. This domestic violence not only inflicts immediate harm but also disrupts her capacity to maintain her business and provide for her family, further entrenching the cycle of economic vulnerability.

Collectively, the interplay of domestic violence, institutional neglect, and economic exploitation creates a complex web of oppression that significantly undermines the dignity, safety, and economic stability of women street vendors. The intersectionality of these forms of violence draws attention to the nuanced and intricate challenges faced by women in the informal economy, highlighting the urgent need for systemic change and support.

The physical, economic, emotional, customer-based, and structural violence that women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni experience is deeply intertwined with broader gender inequalities and power dynamics. These forms of violence act as tools of control and intimidation, reinforcing the subordination of women in both the informal and formal sectors. The fear generated by these violent acts not only disrupts their economic activities but also perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability and dependence. Analysing these findings enhances the insight into the diverse forms of violence experienced by women street vendors. This highlights the urgent need for policies and interventions that address not only immediate safety concerns but also the underlying gender inequalities that sustain such violence.

How does gender shape the violence experienced by these women?

Researching the lives of women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni demonstrates how profoundly gender impacts their struggles with violence and economic hardship. Gender dynamics are intricately woven into their daily lives, influencing their interactions, power dynamics, and roles both within their families and the marketplace. These factors significantly increase the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by these women in their work. Feminist economic theorists underscore the pivotal importance of reproductive labour—activities such as household chores, childcare, and eldercare—not merely as personal duties, but as essential pillars that uphold society. This type of labour is vital not only for maintaining the health and well-being of the workforce but also for ensuring the sustained operation of the larger economy, as highlighted by Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe (2018:9).

The intersection of reproductive labour and economic activities is highly significant for women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni. These women juggle the demands of household responsibilities—cooking, cleaning, and caring for family members—before they even set foot in the market. This interplay underscores the dual burden they bear, having to navigate the often-competing demands of domestic life and business commitments. While all women are subjected to the pressures of reproductive labour, those engaged in the informal sector face unique challenges. The informal nature of their employment means that they often lack access to formal rewards such as steady wages, benefits, or job security, which exacerbates their economic instability.

The requirement to manage household tasks alongside their entrepreneurial efforts not only restricts their available time but also exacerbates the stress and fatigue they endure throughout the day. Time management emerges as a critical skill for these vendors as they strive to effectively balance their dual roles. Successful time budgeting empowers them to meet market demands and maximise their earnings. For example, those involved in the catering sector often prepare meals in advance, bringing both pre-made dishes and fresh ingredients to the market to accommodate unforeseen customer needs. This proactive strategy reflects the feminist economic principle of time budgeting, which underscores the necessity of allocating time efficiently to achieve economic success (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9).

Research findings from Muswodi Dipeni reveal that these women begin their day well before sunrise, often rising at 4 a.m. to prepare their products and secure advantageous vending spots. This early preparation is vital for boosting sales and fostering a reliable customer base.

However, the heavy weight of their household responsibilities means they often start their marketplace activities already drained of energy. This duality stresses the intricate link between reproductive labour and economic productivity. Supporting these observations, Legodi and Kanjere (2015:62) argue that women experience heightened levels of stress due to the combination of long work hours and family obligations. Such burdens restrict their economic choices and expose them to various forms of violence, including emotional, physical, and financial exploitation.

The economic disadvantages experienced by women street vendors are further exacerbated by gender-based discrimination and entrenched social biases. They face obstacles such as limited access to prime trading locations, fierce competition from established vendors, and various discriminatory practices that hinder their market engagement. Evictions from bustling marketplaces—often considered more suitable for male vendors—result in economic instability and a loss of loyal customers, deepening their financial precariousness.

Feminist economic frameworks critique these systemic inequities, asserting that the division of labour along gender lines and discriminatory practices severely limit women's economic prospects. The exclusion of women from prime vending areas and the consistent undervaluation of their contributions reinforces the broader phenomenon known as the feminization of poverty, where women disproportionately occupy the lower rungs of the economic ladder due to systemic biases and gendered labour divisions (Schmitt, Mutz, and Erbe, 2018:9; Folbre, 2006:19). Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality lens is crucial for fully understanding the complexities of women's experiences. The intersection of gender, socioeconomic status, and their roles in the informal sector creates specific vulnerabilities for these women. Structural violence, deeply embedded within societal and institutional frameworks, perpetuates discrimination and neglect towards them. When these women bravely report incidents of violence to authorities, they are often met with scepticism or outright dismissal, further marginalizing their experiences and worsening their financial instability.

Feminist economic studies highlight the macroeconomic significance of unpaid reproductive labour. By integrating this type of work into the broader narrative of economic activity, feminist economists challenge traditional economic models that frequently overlook or devalue caregiving roles. Acknowledging unpaid care work as a critical component of economic activity fosters a more inclusive and realistic understanding of economic productivity, fundamentally altering perceptions of both labour and value (Folbre, 2006:190). The

experiences of women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni compellingly illustrate the essential connections between reproductive labour and economic engagement, reinforcing the need for systemic change and recognition of their invaluable contributions.

How does violence impact the economic activities and livelihoods of women street vendors?

The violence faced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni has deeply entrenched implications for their economic activities, decision-making, and overall livelihoods. This violence manifests in various forms, each imposing a significant toll on these women's lives. The immediacy of its impact stretches beyond mere financial loss to affect their long-term economic resilience and psychological well-being.

Physical violence, including assaults and harassment, can lead to serious injuries, which compel these vendors to take extended breaks from their work. For instance, if a vendor is physically attacked, the resulting injuries not only cause pain and suffering but may also render her unable to continue selling her goods for days or even weeks. This absence quietly translates to substantial losses in income as daily sales slip away and customer relationships stagnate. Moreover, the fear associated with potential physical confrontations can drive these women away from bustling market areas where foot traffic is higher, pushing them into less advantageous locations that contribute to a sharp decline in sales and customer engagement.

Emotional violence often manifests through relentless verbal harassment and intimidation from both customers and authorities, creating an unbearable work environment. The constant cloud of anxiety looms large, affecting crucial business decisions. For example, a vendor may struggle to negotiate fair prices, fearful of provocation, while the stress of ongoing harassment may prevent her from effectively managing relationships with customers. The psychological burden of daily intimidation takes a toll on motivation levels and productivity, directly affecting her ability to sustain her economic activities.

Economic violence, which includes severe cases of extortion and inequitable price negotiations enforced by local authorities, poses a direct threat to the financial well-being of these vendors. For instance, being forcibly removed from prime selling locations can lead to a noticeable drop in customer base, effectively stripping them of regular, loyal buyers. Women in such precarious conditions usually have to choose immediate survival measures over long-term growth strategies. Thus, they may sell their goods at significantly reduced prices just to make quick sales, undermining their potential profit margins.

The broader, long-term impacts of this violence on women street vendors are stark and concerning. Economic instability resulting from acts of violence erodes their capacity to reinvest in their businesses, crippling their visions for expansion or improvement. For example, a vendor who frequently faces extortion may find her savings dwindling, leaving scant resources for upgrading her inventory or enhancing her market stall. Such financial constraints stymie their growth prospects, making it increasingly difficult to elevate their economic positions or improve the quality of their products.

What coping strategies do women street vendors employ to sustain their livelihoods?

Women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni confront a multitude of challenges that significantly affect their livelihoods, including economic instability and the looming threat of violence. These challenges are largely exacerbated by the societal norms surrounding gender and the systemic marginalization of women within the informal sector. Recent research has uncovered that, in response to these pressing issues, the women vendors have implemented a variety of innovative and effective coping strategies.

One of the most critical obstacles they face is the issue of safety and security in their working environment. To combat this concern, women street vendors have formed tightly-knit solidarity groups. These groups enhance their security by promoting the practice of attending the marketplace in groups, thus ensuring that they travel to and from their workspaces together, particularly during the early morning and late evening hours. By aligning their work schedules, these vendors not only decrease the risk of violence but also cultivate a robust support network that fosters a sense of community and collective safety among the members.

Financial challenges are another significant hurdle, primarily stemming from the complexities of customer negotiations around pricing. To address this instability, women street vendors have adopted assertive pricing strategies. They carefully select and offer products that match the price points their customers are willing to pay, while also actively engaging in negotiations to protect their profit margins. This adaptability helps them navigate fluctuating market demands and maintain their economic viability despite external pressures.

The research also highlights the critical role of financial support networks, such as *stokvels*—community savings groups—and women's clubs, in fortifying their economic stability. These organizations enable women street vendors to pool together their resources, facilitating savings and providing crucial support during financial emergencies. The study revealed that

participants find these communal actions essential for generating business capital and coping with unexpected expenses, ensuring financial security crucial for their survival and growth.

Through their daily operations, these resilient women demonstrate remarkable perseverance and creativity in overcoming the complexities of their environment. It is vital to reinforce these grassroots initiatives by implementing supportive laws that provide legal protections against discrimination and violence. Additionally, the establishment of support systems—including accessible legal aid and counselling services—would significantly aid their efforts. Raising public awareness about the particular struggles women in the informal sector experience can help amplify their voices and concerns.

Moreover, offering targeted financial support and specialized training programs could further empower these women, ultimately enhancing their capabilities to sustain their livelihoods and achieve lasting economic resilience. The coping strategies that women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni employ not only reflect their tenacity and ingenuity but also illuminate their determination to thrive despite ongoing difficulties. By utilizing collective safety approaches, robust pricing tactics, and strong financial networks, these vendors navigate the intricate dynamics of the informal economy with exceptional resilience. Comprehensive policy measures and interventions are essential to support their ongoing efforts.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

When I think back on my progress as an African feminist studies researcher, I realize how much this discipline has influenced my personal growth and academic journey. My journey started with a small comprehension of feminist theories and how they are applied in African contexts. I have studied gender, culture, and identity in greater detail throughout time, which has improved my research and expanded my viewpoints. I have developed my critical thinking abilities and learned to approach problems from several perspectives by actively participating in conversations and seminars and by rigorously engaging with a variety of literature. My empathy and dedication to promoting social justice have also grown as a result of learning about the real-life struggles faced by African women. Moreover, my research has inspired me to challenge and question traditional narratives and the biases that exist in both academic discourse and societal institutions. This practice of critical self-reflection has helped shape my identity as a researcher. I view my development as an ongoing process, characterized by a growing understanding of the intersections of gender, power, and cultural dynamics. I am committed to continuous learning and activity within the African Feminist paradigm, which I believe is essential for making significant contributions to the discipline and society at large.

This research focused on exploring the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in a particular South African peri-urban context, Muswodi Dipeni, and the strategies they draw on to sustain a living. Utilizing rich qualitative data and thematic analysis, the study identified four central themes: livelihoods, gender dynamics, diverse forms of violence, and coping strategies. Together, these themes provide a nuanced understanding of how informal economic work is navigated at the intersection of gender, marginalization, and survival. The findings demonstrate that women in this context are not only the primary contributors to their families' economic well-being but also bear the burdens of unpaid reproductive labour. They operate informal businesses in physically demanding and insecure conditions, facing unpredictable income streams and minimal institutional support. Their ability to engage in trade and access customers is significantly influenced by gendered power structures, which affect aspects ranging from their positioning in marketplaces to their household responsibilities.

The research highlighted that violence is not merely incidental or occasional; rather, it is intricately woven into the daily lives of women working in the informal economy. Participants described a complex interplay of violence—encompassing physical, emotional, economic,

structural, and customer-related dimensions—that are often intertwined. These forms of violence were not restricted to a single environment; they manifested both in private homes and public spaces, frequently exacerbated by social stigma, inadequate institutional protections, and discriminatory practices.

Despite these difficulties, the women displayed remarkable agency and resilience. They established solidarity groups for physical safety, organized savings clubs to enhance their financial stability, and negotiated boundaries in their interactions with customers to regain some control over exploitative situations. Exploring the coping mechanisms used by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni provides important insights into their agency and resiliency in the face of violence. In addition to highlighting women's agency, the research offers a complex view of their lived experiences by highlighting the many solidarity and individual measures that women street vendors use to sustain their livelihoods.

In addition to addressing a gap in the literature concerning violence in informal economies, these findings also enhance feminist economic theory by providing grounded insight into how survival, resistance, and structural inequality coexist in the lives of women traders. The study underscores the urgent need for policy and scholarly attention that recognizes informal traders not merely as marginal figures in the economy but as central contributors whose labour, knowledge, and lived experiences are vital to inclusive development. In this manner, the research not only amplifies underrepresented voices but also advocates for reimagined social and economic frameworks that centre the dignity and rights of women at the margins.

Although this research provides insightful findings, some limitations must be noted. To begin, the study is limited to Muswodi Dipeni, which may limit the findings' applicability to other situations or areas in South Africa or elsewhere. Second, because the research is qualitative and depends on participant observations and interviews, it may generate bias owing to subjective interpretations of experiences. Furthermore, the study excluded viewpoints from consumers and municipal officials, which may have offered a more thorough comprehension of the dynamics of informal trade.

The complexity of the findings that were given was further limited by the use of two languages, as I collected data using Tshivenda and later on translated the data into English, which resulted in certain meanings being lost in the translation process. Finally, the findings' long-term significance may be impacted by the quickly shifting socioeconomic landscape brought on by outside forces like policy changes and economic downturns. To overcome these constraints and

gain a deeper understanding of women's experiences in informal trading environments, future studies should employ a wider geographic scope and alternative methodological approaches. Despite my reflections on the limitations of this research, however, I hope that I have moved with care, intellectual and ethical rigor, and respect for all my participants in creating what is one of very few pieces of South African work which focus on the meaning of street trading for women, insisting the significance of taking the informal sector and reproductive labour into feminist knowledges.

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**APPENDIX A:
CONSENT FORM**



Research focus: **EXPLORING THE FORMS OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN STREET VENDORS AND THE STRATEGIES THEY USE TO SUSTAIN A LIVING, IN A PARTICULAR SOUTH AFRICAN PERI-URBAN CONTEXT, MUSWODI DIPENI.**

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

1. Invitation and purpose

I am Phindulo Mphoshomali, a Master of Social Science student from the African Gender Institute University of Cape Town. I am researching the above topic intending to explore: what are the forms of violence experienced by women street vendors in Muswodi Dipeni and the strategies they draw on to sustain a living? You are invited to participate in the research project. The project uses a method called a semi-structured interview and participant observation. These methods allow the researcher to develop an interview plan before the interview. The interview plan can include a list of crucial questions guiding the interview but not limiting participants' responses.

2. Procedures

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. However, if you decide to take part in the study, you will be expected to do the following: Meet with the researcher. The meetings will include a semi-structured interview. During the meeting, we will discuss the project, your expectations of the study, your views, and your experiences. The meeting will take place at a convenient venue, which I will

inform you about in advance, and will last up to 60 minutes. The meeting will be audio recorded, but I will ensure your identity is protected. Moreover, I will also visit the workspace to do participant observation as part of locating myself as a researcher.

3. Inconveniences

I do not expect that you will be distressed by the research, but if it does become distressing, you may stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. You might be inconvenienced by giving up an hour of your time. If, however, you do experience any distress, here is a list of resources where you can access help:

- Tondalushaka community care: Muswodi Dipeni, Tondalushaka, cell number: 0760524559
- Hidden treasure church counselling: 07224592433

4. Benefits

You are allowed to share your views and experiences; what you tell us may highlight some important societal issues. You are allowed to tell us and others what is important to you and your community.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

I will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be kept in a secure folder on the researcher's computer without your name or other personal identifiers. Some of this research may be published in academic journals, but your identity will always be protected.

6. Money matters

You will not be paid for taking part in the study.

7. Contact details

If you have further questions or concerns about the study, please contact the researcher at the following contact details

Email- phindulomphoshomali1@gmail.com

Phone number- 0662031065

Consent

If you understand all of the procedures and the risks and benefits of the study and you would like to participate in the project, please sign below:

1. I consent to participate in the interview for this research. Circle YES / NO
2. I consent to my voice being recorded. Circle YES / NO
3. I consent for the researcher to use my name when quoting what I say in her project.
Circle YES/NO

Name and surname of participant: _____

Signed: _____ (signature of participant)

Signed: _____ (researcher)

Date: _____ (participant)

Date: _____ (researcher)

APPENDIX B:
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research focus: **EXPLORING THE FORMS OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN STREET VENDORS AND THE STRATEGIES THEY USE TO SUSTAIN A LIVING, IN A PARTICULAR SOUTH AFRICAN PERI-URBAN CONTEXT, MUSWODI DIPENI.**

1 Demographic

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Relationship status
- Home language
- Employment

2 Family structure

- How many people do you live with?
- how many people in your family are still school-going?

3 Street vending business

- When did you start your business?
- What part of vending are you involved in?
- What motivated you to be a vendor?

4 Power division

- Why do you think there are more women in the street vending than men?
- Are men and women treated equally in the street vending?
- How does the customer influence the structure of the market and selling?

- What is your take on price negotiation?
- What role do law enforcers play in keeping street vendors safe?
- What makes vendors fight among themselves?
- How do the fights influence the safety of vendors and their families?

APPENDIX C:

TABLE 1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participants demographic data

The demographic data of the individuals involved is compiled in Table 1. Additionally, as the study question indicated that it was primarily focused on Black women, gender and ethnicity were not included in the table.

Name(pseudonym)	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Family members total	Products	Interview location
Nemakonde	51	Widow	5	6	Vegetables Fruits	Home
Masakona	47	In a relationship	1	5	Body lotion deodorant Tableware	Home
Sigonde	44	In a relationship	4	5	Catering (baked goods, cooked meal)	Home
Gumbu	40	Married	2	4	Archar Firewood Raw meat Cigarette	Marketplace

Khomola	43	In a relationship	3	4	Vegetables Fruits	Marketplace
Munyai	44	Married	3	4	Cigarette Firewood Dried vegetables Baked goods	Marketplace
Mbedzi	47	Married	4	6	Catering (cooked food and baked goods)	Marketplace
Madamalala	48	Widow	1	2	Pholishi (homemade polish) Mashonzha (mopane worms)	Marketplace
Thinawanga	45	Married	4	6	Cigarettes, raw game meat, firewood,	Marketplace
Matamela	50	Widow	5	6	Mashonzha, potatoes, sweet potatoes,	Home

					pumpkin, nuts and corn	
Ndou	51	Widow	2	4	Tshikoli (Corn) Nduhu (nuts) Tomatoes and Mutshaini	Marketplace
Makana	51	Married	4	7	Clothes (school uniform, new clothes and second-hand clothes)	Marketplace

Table 1

Table 1 above highlights the demographic details of the participants. I employed pseudonyms to safeguard the participants' identities, thus the names listed in this research paper are not their true names. After I had spent some time at their marketplace, participants were given the option of choosing where their interview would take place as indicated in the table. Some selected to have their interview conducted there in the marketplace after they were done with their daily trade, while others opted to have it conducted in their houses. Additionally, I offered them the choice because they are street vendors who operate at the market; meaning I did not want them to miss their trading hours for the sake of my research and I wanted to respect their privacy as well as prevent injury and loss to their business that would come with me interviewing at their marketplace Infront of their customers. Moreover, the table also reveals that most participants who indicated that they were married opted to be interviewed at the marketplace after they were done with their business of the day. When I asked them, they indicated that they would

rather share their experience at the marketplace than at home as some of the challenges they experienced were connected to their partners.

APPENDIX D:**PICTURES CAPTURED FROM OBSERVING RESEARCH LOCATIONS**



The photographs elegantly capture the vibrant essence of the marketplace during the data collection process. In the foreground, colourful stalls showcase a delightful array of items, including fresh fruits and vegetables, handmade crafts, and delicious local delicacies. Vendors engage warmly with customers, creating a lively atmosphere filled with conversation and friendly exchanges. People of all ages wander through the aisles, their faces glowing with wonder and excitement. Overall, these images present a bustling hub of social interaction and cultural exchange, transforming the marketplace into so much more than just a place to shop.