

Fifteenth International Conference on The Constructed Environment
Berlin, Germany, 10-11 April 2025

Place Design and Urban Informality: Insights from Southern Urbanism

Hesam Kamalipour

Reader in Urban Design, Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Nastaran Peimani

Reader in Urban Design, Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Summary

Urban informalities, including informal settlements, street vending, and informal transport, remain a defining feature of place in cities of the Global South. This study explores the interrelations between these informal practices, advocating for a shift beyond conventional views on urban design and place transformation. It highlights the interdependencies between urban formalities and informalities, drawing on multiple illustrations from cities in the Global South. The paper concludes by calling for research that bridges global insights with local realities, providing a more nuanced understanding of how places work in practice across diverse urban contexts in the Global South.

Theme

The Design of Space and Place

Keywords

Place, Urban Design, Informal Urbanism, Public Space, Urban Informality

References

- Cervero, R., & Golub, A. (2007). Informal transport: A global perspective. *Transport policy*, 14(6), 445-457.
- Dovey, K. (2025). Informality as the ur-form of urbanity: Keeping the ur- in urban studies. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 49(1), 39-51.
- Dovey, K. (2012). Informal urbanism and complex adaptive assemblage. *International Development Planning Review*, 34(4), 349-368.
- Dovey K., & Recio, R. B. (2024). *The Spatial Logic of Informal Urbanism: Inventraset Assemblages*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dovey, K., Recio, R. B., & Pafka, E. (2022). The spatial logic of informal street vending in Manila: An assemblage approach. *Space and Polity*, 26(3), 192-215.
- Franck, K., & Stevens, Q. (Eds.). (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life*. London: Routledge.
- Hernández-García, J. (2013). *Public space in informal settlements: The Barrios of Bogotá*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kamalipour, H. (2024). Informal urban design: Forms of informal settlement. In: Roberts, M., & Nelson, S. (Eds.). *Research Handbook on Urban Design* (pp. 107-124). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800373471.00013>
- Kamalipour, H. (2024). Framing urbanities: Invisible/visible urban assemblages. *Visual Studies*, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2024.2301735>
- Kamalipour, H. (2022). Assembling informal urbanism. In: Marinic, G., & Meninato, P. (Eds.). *Informality and the city: Theories, actions and interventions* (pp. 83-97). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99926-1_6
- Kamalipour, H. (2023). Exploring informal urbanism. In: Kamalipour, H., Aelbrecht, P., & Peimani, N. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Design Research Methods* (pp. 369-377). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003168621-41>
- Kamalipour, H. (2020). Improvising places: The fluidity of space in informal settlements. *Sustainability*, 12(6), 2293. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062293>
- Kamalipour, H., & Peimani, N. (2025). Public space and informal urbanism in the Global South. In: Dolley, J., Hardy, K., & Matthews, T. (Eds.). *Inclusive Public Space and The Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 105-114). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035322411.00014>

Kamalipour, H. (2023). Shaping public space in informal settlements: A case study. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3781. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043781>

Kamalipour, H., & Dovey, K. (2020). Incremental production of urban space: A typology of informal design. *Habitat International*, 98, 102133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2020.102133>

Kamalipour, H., & Peimani, N. (2021). Informal urbanism in the state of uncertainty: Forms of informality and urban health emergencies. *Urban Design International*, 26(2), 122-134. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41289-020-00145-3>

Kamalipour, H., & Peimani, N. (2019). Negotiating space and visibility: Forms of informality in public space. *Sustainability*, 11(17), 4807. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11174807>

Kamalipour, H., & Peimani, N. (2024). On the ethics of researching informal urbanism. *International Development Planning Review*, 46(3), 243-255. <https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2023.13>

Lynch, K. (1981). *Good City Form*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ojeda Ledesma, L. (2023). Researching the spatial heterogeneity of informal street vending. In: Kamalipour, H., Aelbrecht, P., & Peimani, N. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Design Research Methods* (pp. 395-406). New York: Routledge.

Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2024). Informal public space: exploring street vending in Tehran. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2024.2348792>

Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2022). Informal street vending: a systematic review. *Land*, 11(6), 829. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11060829>

Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2022). Mapping the spatiality of informal street vending. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2022.2150267>

Peimani, N. & Kamalipour, H. (2022). Assembling transit urban design in the global South: urban morphology in relation to forms of urbanity and informality in the public space surrounding transit stations. *Urban science*, 6(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci6010018>

Peimani, N., & Dovey, K. (2018). Motorcycle mobilities. In: Dovey, K., Pafka, E., & Ristic, M. (Eds.). *Mapping Urbanities: Morphologies, flows, possibilities* (pp. 119-128). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315309163-7>

Thinh, N. K., Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2025). Forms and spatiality of street vending in informal settlements: The case of in-between spaces in Hanoi. *Cities*, 161, 105870. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2025.105870>

Thinh, N. K., Kamalipour, H., & Peimani, N. (2024). Morphogenesis of forgotten places: A typology of villages-in-the-city in the Global South. *Habitat International*, 153, 103184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2024.103184>

UN-HABITAT. (2006). *The state of the world's cities report 2006/7: The Millennium Development Goals and urban sustainability*. London: Earthscan.