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## Street Vending Livelihoods: Exploring the Potential of Property Rights Regimes in Public Space, A Case Study in Xi'an

Mengyuan Wang, Alison Brown, Hesam Kamalipour

Cardiff University, United Kingdom

### Summary

Public spaces are essential sites for street vendors' operations, but in many parts of the world, vendors' rights to use these spaces are undermined by ambiguous or exclusionary property rights regimes, which inhibit their ability to sustain a livelihood. In the Chinese context, the dual land property rights system in urban and rural areas presents a unique opportunity to study the impact of different land rights regimes on the marginalized street vending community. While urban public spaces are government-owned and regulated, those in urban villages operate as rural land and are collectively owned by villagers. This collective ownership model offers a more inclusive approach to public space management, potentially benefiting street vendors. This research aims to investigate the potential of collective property rights in urban villages as a more inclusive alternative to the socialist rights regimes of urban China or regimes influenced by capitalist economic logic found outside China. Through a case study of Xi'an, the research conducts comparative analyses of property rights regimes in public spaces within and outside urban villages to explore how different frameworks impact street vendors' livelihoods. The findings reveal that urban villages with collective property rights regimes offer more inclusive environments for street vendors. These areas see higher vendor density, longer operating hours, more vendor types, a greater diversity of products, and higher incomes compared to those outside urban villages. However, despite having more stable access to public spaces, vendors in urban villages face significant operational costs, such as rent, utilities, and sanitation fees. Additionally, their access remains precarious, as informal rental agreements leave them vulnerable to sudden rent increases and evictions.